

# **Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education for Community Adult Learning Centers**



**Adult and Community Learning Services**

75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148-4906  
[www.doe.mass.edu/acls](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls)

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## **Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education**

These Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education are based on research and performance data and outline the essential program components and processes that constitute effective ABE services. The ESE's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit together with the field through task forces, public hearings and other venues developed them. Future updates to these Guidelines will be posted on the ACLS website: [www.doe.mass.edu/acls](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls)

When reviewing the Guidelines it is important to note the distinction between those components and processes that are designated as “must” be present in a program and those components and processes that are designated as recommended are “should” in a program.

The Guidelines are divided into five sections: Adult Basic Education (ABE) Rate System, Student Services, Program and Staff Development, Administration, and Program Service Options.

The **Adult Basic Education Rate System** section focuses on the system of funding that is used to support the Guidelines for Effective ABE Programs. In order to ensure that sufficient funding is available to support each student in his/her funded program, Adult and Community Learning Services uses the ABE Rates System.

The **Student Services** section focuses on program design for rate-based classes, outreach and recruitment, intake, orientation, placement, and curriculum and instruction. This section also addresses specifics regarding instructional materials, educational counseling/ADA coordination, retention, Performance Standards including countable outcomes (student articulated goals), assessment and follow-up. Finally, this section also provides guidelines for non-rate based classes and defines supplemental and stand-alone non-rate based classes.

The **Program and Staff Development** section focuses on the guidelines that a program must follow to support program development (activities that support program improvement) and the professional development of staff.

The **Administration** section focuses on the components of effective program leadership and management including, but not limited to, the following: accountability to a governing board, required documentation and data entry requirements, attendance at required ESE meetings, staff salary and benefits information, establishment of an ABE Advisory Council, community planning, and an overview of fiscal responsibilities.

The **Program Service Options** section focuses on the student services that programs may offer in addition to their core ABE and ESOL services. Typically, these services are negotiated between ACLS and the program in year one of a five-year cycle. Program service options include: ABE for the Homeless, Participatory Health Education, Family Literacy and a Volunteer Component.

# **Adult Basic Education Rate System**

## **Overview of the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Rate System**

Each year, grantees submit a program design (a set of services) based on the approved design from year one of the grant cycle and the Guidelines for Effective ABE. If the needs of the community change during the five-year cycle, the program director should talk with his/her program specialist about adjusting the program plan so that the program can adapt to the changing needs of the community. A program needing to make changes to the design because of changes in the community must get ESE approval prior to making the adaptations. The cost of the proposed design is based primarily on the total costs of the proposed classes. The amount of funding for each class is calculated by using the rate (or cost per student hour) established by ACLS. The rate incorporates all of the costs associated with the "musts" found in the Guidelines for Effective ABE (e.g., counseling, program and staff development, administration) and is dependent on the teacher-to-student ratio for that class. Classes funded through this mechanism are called "rate-based" classes. In addition to supporting rate-based services, ACLS also funds "non-rate based" classes.

ABE stands for Adult Basic Education. ABE is an umbrella term used to describe a range of educational services for adults from basic literacy (including English for non-native speakers of English), numeracy, and high school equivalency (GED)/ adult diploma programs (ADP).

ACLS funds programs in Massachusetts to provide educational services to adults with academic skill levels below "those of a high-school graduate", and/or adults who need English language skills to succeed in our communities. Through both federal and state grants, we fund a broad network of education providers/programs, including local school systems, community-based agencies, community colleges, libraries, volunteer organizations, correctional facilities, and others. ACLS also funds family literacy and workplace education programs.

In order to be eligible for adult basic education, students must be at least 16 years of age and withdrawn from school.

## **Change in Program Location**

If a program plans to move to another facility, the ACLS Program Specialist must be notified prior to the relocation and a new ADA self-evaluation must be completed and submitted no later than 30 business days after relocation.

## **Requirements of Rate-Based Instructional Services**

In Community Adult Learning Centers a minimum of 80%\* of instructional funding is used to support rate-based classes. Rate-based classes are those classes that have a fixed schedule (meeting at least five hours per week and provided for a minimum of 150 hours per year), have a fixed number of student seats or slots and whose cost is covered by using the cost per student hour established by the ABE rates system. The rates are calculated to pay the staff and to provide support to the students and the program. For more information about the structure of rate-based classes, see the Student Services section in this document.

\*Note exception: A program offering nine hours or more of instruction may have less than 80% of its instructional funding supporting rate-based classes.



The class selections for rate-based classes are:

- Core ABE/ESOL (default)
- Integrated ABE/Workforce Development
- Pre-Literacy ESOL I, Pre-Literacy ESOL II, Pre-Literacy ESOL III
- ADP (Adult Diploma Program)
- Homeless
- Pathways to Family Success
- STAR
- FS: Family Support (for Family Success component only)

The following two charts provide more information about class size, hours and rates per student slot.

**ACLS Guidelines for Class Size and Hours**  
**Preferred Class Size**  
**FY2012**

Class Service Types	Required Class Size  Per Level	Estimated Hours  Needed to Complete 1 GLE or 1 SPL	Hours of Instruction Per Week	
			Range	Preferred
<b>Beginning Literacy ABE (GLE 0-1.9)</b> <b>Beginning ABE (GLE 2-3.9)</b>	*7-12  *7-15	166	5-20	7 – 9 for employed  12 – 20 for unemployed
<b>Pre-ASE/GED (GLE 4-8.9)</b>	10-20	171	5-20	
<b>ASE/GED (GLE 9-12)</b>	10-20	148	5-20	
<b>Beginning ESOL (SPL 0-3)</b>	*7-15	173	5-20	
<b>Intermediate ESOL (SPL 4-5)</b>	10-20	168	5-20	
<b>Advanced ESOL (SPL 6-7)</b>	10-20	152	5-20	

**Note:** Programs must provide classes for a minimum of 32 weeks up through a maximum of 48 weeks per year. The optimum range is considered to be 42 to 46 weeks.

To allow programs to offer one or more classes of nine hours or more of instruction per week, ACLS has modified some of the program planning regulations for these programs, such as:

- Changes in summer class offerings
- Waiving the 20% cap on non-rates classes
- Waiving the 32 week requirement (while maintaining minim 150 hours/year)

## ACLS Guidelines for Student to Teacher Ratio & Rate per Student Slot FY2012

Required Class Sizes (Student to Teacher Ratio)	Class Levels	Rate Per Student Slot
7:1 to 8:1	Students with <i>documented</i> learning disabilities*	\$11.69
9:1	Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning ABE Beginning ESOL	\$9.94
10:1	Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning ABE Intermediate ABE (Pre-ASE / GED) Advanced ABE (ASE / GED) Beginning ESOL Intermediate ESOL Advanced ESOL	\$9.94
11:1 to 12:1	Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning ABE Intermediate ABE (Pre-ASE / GED) Advanced ABE (ASE / GED) Beginning ESOL Intermediate ESOL Advanced ESOL	\$8.83
13:1 to 15:1	Beginning ABE Intermediate ABE (Pre-ASE / GED) Advanced ABE (ASE / GED) Beginning ESOL Intermediate ESOL Advanced ESOL	\$7.67
16:1 to 20:1	Intermediate ABE (Pre-ASE / GED) Advanced ABE (ASE / GED) Intermediate ESOL Advanced ESOL	\$6.56

\* Classes with seven to eight students may be used when a majority of students have documented special needs. Programs must be able to collect a minimum of at least one of the following documents from students:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) or written verification of the IEP.
- Any evaluation information provided by another agency (e.g., Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Mental Retardation, medical center, etc.) that is based on the clinical documentation of a learning disability.
- Nancy Payne Learning Needs Screening Tool (The individual receives a screening score that places him/her in the “at risk” range). If an ABE program decides to screen students for special needs as a part of the admission policy, the ADA requires that all students must be screened. Students can be individually assessed for special needs after they are enrolled in the program.

### **Fluid Class Slots and Flexible Class Over-enrollments by Service Type (ABE/ESOL) Sizes**

Programs have flexibility related to class enrollments. Programs can enroll students in classes at the site by service type (ABE/ESOL) as long as the total program enrollments do not exceed the total slots by 20%.

- **Class slots will be determined at the site level by service type (ABE/ESOL)**  
Class sizes will be determined by service type (ABE and /ESOL). The total class over-enrollments should never exceed the 20% cap. Note that the current student to teacher ratio requirement remains the same as listed in the ABE Guidelines on page 8.
  - The maximum class size including over-enrollments is 24.
  - The minimum class size for 100 level classes with students with learning disabilities is seven students and minimum class size for all other classes is nine students.
- **Enrollment by Funding Type Eliminated**  
It is no longer necessary to assign the funding type (Direct, Indirect, Match) or the fund code (345, 359, etc.) to each student enrollment. For reporting purposes, the system will automatically assign the funding type (Direct, Indirect, Match) and fund code based on the approved program plan.

### No Unfunded Slots

Starting in FY2012, there will only be funded slots in classes -- no unfunded slots. Note that slots can be changed at anytime - preferably at the beginning of the month. The maximum enrolled per month will be the base for the percent attendance performance standard. The overenrolled is the sum of each individual class. Numbers are calculated when classes are completed.

ABE CLASSES			ESOL CLASSES		
Class Code	Slots Approved in Program Plan	+ 20% Over-enrollment	Class Code	Slots Approved in Program Plan	+20% Over-enrollment
101	7	8	501	12	14
201	12	14	502	12	14
301	12	14	601	12	14
			701	12	14
<b>Total ABE Program Slots : 31</b>			<b>Total ESOL Program Slots: 48</b>		
<b>ABE Class Over-Enrollments: 5</b> <b>Total ABE Slots: 36</b>			<b>ESOL Class Over-Enrollments: 8</b> <b>Total ESOL Slots: 56</b>		

### Example:

Examples for ABE Classes:		5 Over-enrollments			
Funded Slots		Fluid Slots #1		Fluid Slots #2	
101	7	101	7	101	8
201	12	201	19	201	10
301	12	301	10	301	18
	31		36		36
Examples for ESOL Classes:		8 Over-enrollments			
Funded Slots		Fluid Slots #1		Fluid Slots #2	
501	12	501	10	501	12
502	12	502	14	502	13
601	12	601	15	601	17
701	12	701	17	701	14

	48		56		56
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### **Non-Rate Based Instructional Services (supplemental and stand alone)**

In Community Adult Learning Centers, a maximum of 20%\* of the instructional funding can support non-rate based classes. Non-rate based classes are optional and not funded based on the rate system. The primary purposes of non-rate based classes are 1) to provide supplemental instruction (e.g., computer instruction) to students enrolled in a rate-based class (supplemental) or 2) to provide instruction to targeted populations through stand-alone non-rate based classes (e.g., students in need of short-term instruction in order to pass the GED tests). Non-rate based classes do not have to be offered for a minimum number of hours per week or weeks per year. A sequence of three classes is not required for non-rate based classes. Programs, however, must maintain an enrollment of a minimum of eight adult learners in non-rate based classes. Non-rate based classes must be cost effective and based on the expenses necessary to support the class. Like rate-based services, funding for non-rate based classes is determined by the need in the community and should be responsive to student articulated needs. See the Student Services section for more information about supplemental and stand-alone non-rate based classes.

\*Note exception: A program offering nine hours or more of instruction per week may have more than 20% of its instructional funding supporting non- rate based classes.

The class selections for non-rate based supplemental (SP) classes are:

- Writing
- Math
- Health Education
- Computer Literacy
- ESOL Conversation
- Employability Skills
- Parenting Support/Education
- Interactive Literacy (formerly call Parent and Child Together/ PACT)
- Drop-in Learning Center
- Citizenship - No less than 75% of the learners in the citizenship class must be enrolled in the program.
- Next Steps
- Distance Learning (Available for programs with the distance learning component).

The class selections for non-rate based stand alone (SA) classes are:

- SA: GED/Content Area Classes
- SA: Drop-in Learning Center (may or may not serve students enrolled in Core ABE classes)

### **Foundation Funding**

Foundation funding is provided for each Community Adult Learning Center to support specific activities. Most of these activities are required, (e.g., Community Planning, Program and Staff Development Coordination, Technology Coordination and ADA Coordination). The unrestricted funds are also defined below.

- **Community Planning:** Included in each grant award is foundation funding which supports community planning activities. These activities include leading or participating in a community planning process. ABE Programs for Incarcerated Adults receive funding to participate in the community planning partnership/s in the primary community to which inmates are discharged. (For more information on Community Planning, see the Administration section of these ABE Guidelines.)
- **Unrestricted:** Included in each grant award is an amount of funding that programs may use at their discretion to provide additional support to any functions that are within the ABE Guidelines. For example, a program may elect to use some or all funds to provide instruction, counseling, community planning, or administration hours.

### **Non-Instructional Components Supported by both Rates and Foundation Funding**

Some required program components are supported by the rates as well as by foundation funding. These components are as follows:

- **Program/Staff Development Coordination:** Programs must use a planning process that links program development activities and professional/staff development. The Program/Staff Development Coordinator guides the process of aligning program goals with individual staff development goals. Refer to the Program and Staff Development section for more information.
- **Technology Coordination:** This position provides support to teachers and students in order to integrate technology into the curriculum. The Technology Coordinator must develop and provide training and technical assistance to staff in effectively utilizing a variety of technologies for communication and administration. The Tech Coordinator may also provide limited troubleshooting. Refer to the Student Services section for more information.
- **ADA Coordination:** The ADA Coordinator ensures that the program implements the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, as all programs must ensure that people with physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities have equal access to services available to the general population. ACLS strongly encourages programs to combine the ADA Coordinator and Counselor positions into one staff position. Refer to the Student Services section for more information and the Disability Guidelines at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acsls/disability/default.html>.

See the Student Services section for descriptions of services supported **only** by the rates.

- Counseling
- Intake
- Assessment
- Placement
- Follow-up of students

### **Flex Funding**

"Flex" funding is used to support a small number of specific ESE-approved components. These include non-rate based classes and the following program service options: Participatory Health Education, Family Literacy Coordinator and a Volunteer Component. See Program Service Options section for more detail.

### **Set Aside Funds**

Set aside funds are a portion of ACLS funding "set aside" during the 2006-2010 Open and Competitive RFP process to support targeted program expenses or activities not included in the other funding categories noted above. Based on the outcomes of the Open and Competitive RFP, some programs received set aside funds based upon the needs in their communities, on availability of funds, and ESE approval. Set aside funds support student transportation, space, childcare, staff travel (for rural programs only), and student leadership projects. In ABE for Incarcerated Adults programs, set aside funding is used to support education/reintegration counseling.



## **Student Services**

## **Student Services**

### **Program Design for Rate-Based Classes**

#### **A Sequence of Three Classes is Required**

In Community Adult Learning Centers that provide fewer than nine hours per week of instruction, a minimum of 80% of instructional funding is used to support rate-based classes. Rate-based classes have a fixed schedule (meeting at least 5 hours per week and are provided for a minimum of 150 hours per year), have a minimum number of student seats or slots and have costs that are covered by using the cost per student hour established by the ABE rates system.

Programs must offer at least a sequence of three ESOL and/or ABE classes at the same part of the day (morning, afternoon or evening). This sequence enables students with constraints on their schedule (e.g., they work, have school age children, etc.) to progress through all three levels. The sequence of three classes must be part of a continuum that enables students to progress from the most basic level of proficiency to a level sufficient to meet their goals. This sequence must include SPL 0-6 (and may include SPL 7) and/or GLE 0-12. This fundamental requirement is in the best interest of the students and attests to the capacity of the particular agency to design and deliver a full range of instructional services to an undereducated and/or limited English speaking population at one site.

If an agency/program/community learning center cannot provide the sequence of classes, then under certain circumstances, and with ESE approval, this sequence may be completed through a collaboration of ESE-funded ABE providers. The requirements include:

- The availability of public transportation at the appropriate times to allow a student to travel to a second site to complete a class in a sequence.
- Coordination among collaborating agencies in order to ensure a curriculum continuum that includes agreed upon curriculum benchmarks for a seamless transition from one ABE level to another.

#### **Memorandum of Agreement**

The memorandum of agreement (MOA) is a written document describing the agreement between the grantee and another organization (working together) to deliver services to undereducated or limited English-speaking adults. The purpose of the MOA is to formalize and clarify the expectations of the grantee and subcontracting program to provide services. All parties must commit to fulfilling the requirements outlined in the signed Statement of Assurances and the Massachusetts *Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education for Community Adult Learning Centers*. Annually the MOA must be revisited: one original must be signed and dated by all partners and submitted to ACLS; however, the MOA, with approval from the Program Specialist, may be updated at any time through written agreement of each partner.

The grantee is legally responsible for effective management of the entire grant, including any funds committed to a partner to purchase student services. The grantee is responsible for having appropriate accounting systems in place to monitor contractual services and ensure that all grant funds are fully expended as articulated in the MOA and in a timely manner. The grantee is required to notify ESE as soon as possible if funds may be unspent, including funds assigned to a partner. If ESE is notified by January that state funds will be unexpended by any partner, the grantee will be asked to amend the grant down so

that the funds can be reallocated as may be needed by other programs. Required components of the MOA include an articulation of the following:

- purpose of the MOA
- description of the roles and responsibilities of staff of each partnering organization
- if the partner is offering instructional services, a detailed description of those services (number and type of classes) as reflected in the SMARTT program plan
- description of the scope of work, including expected results
- duration of agreement articulating the beginning and end date
- financial obligations of each partner, e.g., contracted partner understands that lead agency must be provided with an expenditure report per line item at a minimum of three (3) times per year, and must submit invoices monthly
- assurance that contracted partner notifies the grantee and the Department by January of any funds anticipated to be unexpended by the close of the grant period. (This early notification and return of unexpended funds allows the Department sufficient time to reallocate those funds to other programs.)
- description of the accounting systems the grantee will use to monitor contractual services and ensure that all grant funds are fully expended as articulated in the MOA and in a timely manner
- assurance that the grantee understands that, whether or not it recovers unexpended contracted funds from contracted partners, it is required to report and return to the state any and all funds unexpended by the close of the grant period
- review MOA at a minimum 3 times per year, beginning, mid year and end of year
- articulation of grounds for termination of the MOA, for example:  
This agreement may be terminated by either of the partners upon written notice delivered to the other party at least thirty (30) days prior to intended date of termination. The grantee must terminate the agreement with the partner organization if its activities are not delivered as described in the MOA. The partner organization will be paid by the grantee for only the portion of the work completed.

MOA's may also include the following:

- referral of students from one program to another
- description of any SMARTT requirements include timeliness of data entry
- referral of tutors to grantee
- review of Cognos data for planning purposes
- responsibility to review ACLS mailings and act upon any required policy changes

### **Exceptions to the Requirement for a Sequence of Three Classes**

- Programs serving students in rural areas may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes.
- Programs serving incarcerated adults may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes.
- Programs serving pre-literacy ESOL students may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes. Pre-literacy ESOL adult learners must have access to ESOL classes either on-site or through community collaboration documented by a memorandum of agreement with an ESE-funded ABE program.
- Adult Diploma classes may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes.
- ABE for the Homeless programs may offer a minimum of a sequence of two classes.

- Programs serving students in July and August may offer a minimum of a sequence of two rate-based classes.

### **Frequency/Duration/Intensity of Instructional Services**

Program must provide services of enough frequency, duration and intensity to enable students to reach their goals.

- Programs must provide classes for a minimum of 150 hours per year up through a maximum of 48 weeks per year. The optimum range is considered to be 42-46 weeks.
- Programs must provide a minimum of five hours of instruction up to a maximum of 20 hours of instruction each week. (The optimum range is 9 hours per week for working adults and 12 to 20 hours per week for unemployed adults).

### **Student/Teacher Ratio for Classes**

Programs must offer classes of no fewer than seven and no more than 20 students per teacher.

However, classes with seven to eight students may only be used when a majority of students have documented special needs. For required class sizes for other classes, see the chart “ACLS Guidelines for Class Size and Hours” in the Adult Basic Education Rate System section. Programs offering classes with seven to eight students must be able to collect a minimum of at least one of the following documents from students:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) or written verification of the IEP.
- Any evaluation information provided by another agency (e.g., Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Mental Retardation, medical center, etc.) that is based on the clinical documentation of a learning disability.
- The results of a screening with the Nancy Payne Learning Needs Screening Tool that places the student in the “at risk” range. Students can be individually assessed for special needs after they are enrolled in the program. However, if an ABE program decides to screen students as a part of the admission policy, the ADA requires that all students must be screened.

### **Managed Enrollment**

A program may choose managed enrollment for a class, several classes, or an entire program.

Managed enrollment generally means that the program has established policies for enrollment. For example, a student may enroll in an instructional program or class only during specific enrollment periods, attend a specific class for the duration of the class term, continue in the same class or another class at the program for subsequent terms only by re-enrolling, and miss no more than a prescribed number of class sessions within a term.

### **Student Outreach and Recruitment**

Programs must employ a variety of outreach and recruitment strategies in order to ensure that eligible adults, including those most in need of literacy, are aware of the program’s services.

### **Wait List Policy**

Programs are expected to maintain an active wait list for applicants who are unable to enroll in any instructional classes due to capacity constraints. Programs must keep their wait list up to date. At a minimum, all students placed on the wait list must be contacted annually to confirm they are still

interested in enrolling in the program. Any waitlist records older than 18 months should be reviewed and deleted as appropriate so that SMARTT wait list numbers are accurate.

Programs must submit the "Wait List Update" in SMARTT by December 1st each year indicating that the wait list information is up to date and accurate. Programs must indicate in the wait list module if the student has been assessed or not. Optional assessment information can be entered to indicate date assessed, test name, and score. Only applicants for whom such confirmation is obtained shall remain on the wait list and all others removed. If the student contacts the program again in the future, the previous or new wait list date may be entered at the discretion of the program.

Programs must immediately enroll any student in good standing who seeks to transfer from another ESE-funded ABE program or place this student at the top of the appropriate waiting list. This includes students from other ESE-funded ABE programs including workplace education and the ABE for Incarcerated Adults programs.

### **Student Intake**

Programs must have a formal process in place for conducting student intake.

- Programs must use the ESE intake and goal form as the basis for collecting student intake and goal information. The program must capture the information that is required on the ESE goal form. The goal form can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/forms/goals.doc>. The intake form can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/forms/intake.doc>.
- Programs must ask each student in a neutral manner to provide his/her social security number and to sign a release of information form for the purpose of goal follow up.
- Students must be at least 16 years of age to be eligible for services.

### **Student Orientation**

Within 30 days of enrollment, programs must provide all students with an orientation to explain the attendance policy, class participation, counseling services, fire drills, emergency evacuation procedures, grievance procedure, rights and responsibilities and basic rules and regulations.

- Programs must ensure that all students, including limited English proficient students, understand the information provided at orientation.
- The information should be made available to students with low levels of English proficiency in their native language. Translation may be provided in writing, through a recording or through an interpreter (who may be a volunteer translator, a bilingual counselor, upper level student, etc.).
- The program must provide each student with a student handbook that clarifies and explains program policies, such as, for example, policies regarding attendance, absenteeism, grievance procedures, educational counseling (and all student support services), assessment policy, course offerings, severe weather policy, fire drill instructions, drug and alcohol policy, expectations for staff and student behavior and other appropriate program specific information.

## **Student Attendance**

Attendance is defined as: the time that a student is physically present in the classroom on the date and at the time the class occurs.

Local programs may and do have their own policies regarding how many absences are allowed before a seat is made available to a person waiting for service; these local policies often distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. These are local decisions. A program may choose to enter “excused hours” in SMARTT if the program wishes to track this data for its own purposes; however, ACLS does not use this information, and “excused hours” will not count toward attendance or average attended hours. For more information about entering “excused hours,” please refer to the SMARTT 3 Manual- 2/09 available at:

<https://smartt.doemass.org/smartt/help/SMARTT%20User%20Manual/wwhelp/wwhimpl/js/html/wwhelp.htm#href=SMARTT%20User%20Manual.1.1.html>

## **Student Placement**

Programs must use effective assessment tools to place students in the most appropriate instructional/class level.

## **Student Retention**

Programs must employ a variety of strategies to promote student retention in order to ensure that students participate in the program long enough to reach their goals.

- The program must have an attendance policy that is applied effectively.
- The program must implement a process that follows up on student absences.
- Programs are encouraged to provide transportation and childcare and/or other additional services.

## **Program Developed Assessments/Classroom Based Assessments**

In addition to the ESE required student assessments for reporting Learner Educational Gain, programs must develop their own classroom-based assessments. Both the required and the classroom-based assessments must be used to measure student progress, inform students of their progress and inform instruction. These classroom-based assessments may include activities such as role-plays, mock interviews, writing exercises, quizzes, dictations, student self-assessment, portfolios, presentations, etc.

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum development and instruction must be aligned with and incorporate the learning standards and benchmarks from the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks and contribute to students’ progress toward achieving their goals. The program must have one unified program-wide curriculum for each service type (e.g. ABE, ESOL). The curriculum should be reviewed on a regular basis (at least annually) to ensure that curriculum, instruction and assessment are aligned with the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks.

- Programs must have a written program-wide curriculum that is used by all teachers in their classes and is overseen by administrators. The program-wide curriculum must be aligned with the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks learning standards and benchmarks.
- The curriculum development process must involve all levels of stakeholders from the student to the Program Director.

- The program must have regular and ongoing common planning time to the extent feasible for the purpose of developing and reviewing curricula.
- The program must base its methodologies and strategies on a foundation of research and effective practice.
- Collaborating entities must have complementary curricula that is aligned with the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks standards and benchmarks.
- Students' goals and objectives must be incorporated into the curricula and must inform instruction. At least annually, programs must update curriculum if the general, broad goals that students are making at the program have changed.
- Curricula must:
  - a) be designed to bring students from the lowest to the highest levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities (e.g., SPL 0-6 and GLE 0-12; programs with ESOL classes may serve up to SPL 7).
  - b) incorporate authentic, real-life contexts that are responsive to the needs, goals, and interests of adult students in their roles as workers, family members, members of the community, and lifelong learners.
  - c) not be dependent upon a single publication, workbook or student text.
  - d) reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the students served.

### Instruction

- Instructional design, lesson planning, and teaching strategies in the classroom must be coordinated with curriculum design at the program level.
- The program must use the benchmarks in the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks to coordinate instructional levels and inform teaching, learning, and classroom-based assessment.
- Instructors must have written lesson plans: one lesson plan per class, per week, that covers plans for the week and addresses the five components outlined in *The Basics of Writing Lesson Plans for ABE / ESOL Classes*. Please see Lesson Planning below.
- Instructional strategies, including a variety of whole group, small group, and individualized instruction, must be used to respond to the needs of the student population. Strategies should also promote student team and student leadership skills.
- A variety of tools and technologies (e.g., audio-visual, computers, video, telephones, tape recorders, calculators, etc.) must be used to support learning.
- Instructional methods must include interactive activities to engage a range of learning preferences, (e.g., visual, aural, tactile, kinesthetic, etc).
- Teachers must create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and promotes active classroom participation, in which learners are willing to take risks in ESOL with respect to the use of English or in ABE with respect to subject matter.

See the <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/frameworks/> for more information on the Curriculum Frameworks.

## **Lesson Planning**

### **The Basics of Writing Lesson Plans for ABE / ESOL Classes**

A written lesson plan

- Describes how learning is to be organized and facilitated in the classroom.
- Documents specific plans for teaching.

#### **To develop a lesson plan,**

1. Determine what will be taught (both content and skills).
2. Formulate the learning objectives for the lesson (e.g., "at the end of the lesson, learners will...").
3. Match what will be taught to a few of the most applicable benchmarks from the ABE Curriculum Framework for Math and/or ELA, or ESOL and identify in the lesson plan. For example, using the ELA Reading Strand, cluster 1-2 vocabulary or fluency benchmarks with 1-2 benchmarks from the Informational Reading standard. If continuing from a previously taught lesson, the benchmarks might be the same as the prior lesson.

#### **Lesson plans contain the following five components:**

##### **1. Learning objectives:**

- Develop clear, measurable objectives to guide what will be taught and how learners will be evaluated. Communicate objectives to students at the beginning of class so the purpose of the lesson is clear.
- Identify two to three objectives outlining what learners will be able to know/do as a result of the lesson.

##### **2. Materials and Resources:**

- Choose authentic materials, to the extent possible, that relate to learners' goals (e.g., employment application, prescription for medicine, library card application).

##### **3. Activities:**

- Determine the steps of the activity and how long the activity will take.
- Create an activity that is clear in focus, engaging and relate to learner interests.
- Use an introductory activity to get students engaged in the topic and connect to and assess their prior experience, and use that information to adjust the lesson if necessary.
- Manage "teacher talk" time so learners are active participants throughout the learning process.
- Make adjustments as needed for students' varied learning styles, learning issues/disabilities, or learners that may have greater knowledge/skill than their classmates.
- Use the Framework benchmark(s) to ensure the activity illuminates and aligns with the learning objective.
- Though brief, add enough written detail to the plan so other teachers at the program might be able to use/adapt the lesson.

##### **4. Assessment:**

- Must directly measure whether each learning objective was met, and/or how well it was met.



- Uses a variety of methods to capture learning, allow all students to shine, and also so learners may monitor their own progress.
- Uses to plan and adjust for what will be taught in following lessons, and provide feedback to learners.

#### **5. Wrap up and Reflection for Students (and Teacher):**

- Devise a way for learners to capture the high points (e.g., what is the goal for learners to take away from the lesson?).
- Provide opportunities for learners to actively monitor their own progress.
- Build in discussion time and ask learners to summarize what they learned or apply what they learned to other contexts in their life. Ask learners to evaluate the class or activities; ask for ideas for the next lesson. Make sure to allow time for students to process questions and responses.
- After the lesson, reflect: what worked well? Did any positive unintended consequences occur, to remember for the next time the lesson is used/adapted? What should be changed in the lesson to be more effective? What to remember about specific learners' needs/goals/accommodations for future classes?

#### **Instructional Materials**

The ABE Rates System provides for \$80 of instructional materials per funded slot.

- Students must be provided with instructional materials (e.g., texts, workbooks, worksheets, dictionaries, and manipulatives) for classroom use and for review at home. The expenses for educational software may also be included.
- Photocopying that infringes on copyright laws is not permitted.

#### **Integration of ABE and Workforce Development**

Since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Massachusetts' systems of ABE and workforce development have been governed by the same authorizing legislation: workforce development is Title I of the Act, and ABE is Title II of the Act. To serve the people of Massachusetts, ABE provides literacy/education services through the ABE programs throughout the state funded by ACLS, and the workforce system serves people through the One-Stop Career Center system of 32 full-service career centers in the sixteen workforce development regions in the state. The policy aspects of these systems are governed by ACLS at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the ABE system, and by regional and state Workforce Investment Boards for the workforce system. All regional Workforce Boards now must include an ABE representative that has been recommended by the Adult and Community Learning Services unit.

Many adult learners articulate personal goals of getting a job or a better job, or increasing their wages as the motivation to improve their basic educational skills; other students have goals of enrolling in college or training programs. These goals corroborate current research findings, which reveal that employment with family-sustaining wages increasingly requires post-secondary education credentials. This reality demonstrates that improving the collaborative relationship between ABE and workforce development is in the best interests of many of our students. Collaborating with different workforce entities can build staff and students' understanding of local information about workforce issues.

Strategies to foster ABE collaboration with the MA workforce system can occur through different mechanisms, such as:

- Involving workforce development representatives on community planning partnerships.
- Developing and using integrated or contextualized curriculum in ABE/ESOL classes (for example, include content about the health care, financial services, hospitality, or other industries for students who are interested in careers in those areas).
- Arranging tours of the One-Stop Career Center for students.
- Encouraging ABE/ESOL teachers and counselors to attend One-Stop Career Center workshops and to inform their students about the session content.
- Inviting a Workforce Board Executive Director or Board Chairperson, or One-Stop Career Center Director to speak at a program event.
- Building collaborations with local business, union, or business organizations (such as Chambers of Commerce).

In addition to the state systems for ABE and workforce development, programs can build collaborations with local business, union, or business organizations (such as Chambers of Commerce) to build staff and students' understanding of local information about workforce issues.

Below is a list of the sixteen workforce development regions and links to their websites:

Berkshire	<a href="http://www.berkshirereb.org/">http://www.berkshirereb.org/</a>
Boston	<a href="http://www.bostonpic.org/">http://www.bostonpic.org/</a>
Bristol	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/bristol.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/bristol.php</a>
Brockton	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/brockton.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/brockton.php</a>
Cape & Islands	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/cape-islands.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/cape-islands.php</a>
Franklin Hampshire	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/franklin.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/franklin.php</a>
Greater Lowell	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/greater-lowell.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/greater-lowell.php</a>
Greater New Bedford	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/new-bedford.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/new-bedford.php</a>
Hampden	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/hampden.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/hampden.php</a>
Lower Merrimack Valley	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/merimack-valley.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/merimack-valley.php</a>
Metro North	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/metro-north.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/metro-north.php</a>
Metro South/West	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/metro-southwest.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/metro-southwest.php</a>
North Central	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/north-central-mass.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/north-central-mass.php</a>
North Shore	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/north-shore.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/north-shore.php</a>
South Shore	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/south-coastal.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/south-coastal.php</a>
Worcester/Central MA	<a href="http://www.massworkforce.com/central-mass.php">http://www.massworkforce.com/central-mass.php</a>

### **Role and Responsibilities of the Educational Counselor/ADA Coordinator**

Programs must have a designated Educational Counselor /ADA Coordinator to provide, coordinate and document all counseling and ADA support services and to provide learners with support services and guidance to assist them in meeting their *educational* goals. The Educational Counselor is supported by the rates and is based on 2.5% of the total student instructional hours and additional foundation funding supports the role of the ADA Coordinator.

Programs must provide physical accessibility to all. Students with disabilities must be able to access all services, but not necessarily at every site. The program must have a system (policy, staffing and resources) in place to provide reasonable accommodations for students with physical and self-disclosed disabilities either through its own resources or by referral to outside agencies.

The Educational Counselor/ADA Coordinator must:

- Be informed of all issues pertaining to interested applicants and current students with disabilities. For example, reception, intake staff, and teachers must apprise the Educational Counselor/ADA Coordinator of all inquiries and encounters with community members, potential applicants, and students who are disabled or who are contacting the program on behalf of an individual with a disability or an organization that serves persons with disabilities.
- Coordinate ADA efforts with classroom teachers and be involved in crafting appropriate and reasonable responses to ADA issues.
- Lead the development, maintenance and implementation of a work plan of the program's ADA compliance activities.
- Annually submit the 10-step ADA Checklist.
- Maintain written documentation of ADA-related activities and hours. Documentation of counseling including ADA-related activities must be kept in locked files to ensure confidentiality.
- Orient new staff and train all staff at least annually regarding ADA issues.
- Attend at least one workshop each year on any disability-related topic.

Additional Educational Counseling responsibilities include:

- Intake, assessment, and follow-up. Goal setting must be coordinated with teachers to inform instruction;
- Referrals to other community resources/agencies, particularly with organizations identified through and participating in ABE Community Planning;
- Assistance in overcoming barriers to attendance such as childcare and transportation;
- Assistance with transitioning students to concurrent and/or the next step in their academic/job training experience; this includes maintaining a close and proactive working relationship with area Career Center and Community College admissions staff; and
- Record keeping including documentation of counseling activities and hours.

Educational Counseling must be provided to all students enrolled in adult basic education programs and students must be able to identify counseling services. The program must have the capacity to communicate and provide counseling with the most predominant student language group in their native language. Multi-site programs must provide educational counseling services to enrolled students at each site. Educational Counseling and ADA services must be available at flexible times to meet students' needs, including during class hours. There must be a posted schedule stating the days and times that counseling is available to students.

### **Technology Coordinator**

Programs must identify a Technology Coordinator. The primary responsibility of this position is to provide support to staff and students in the areas of developing and implementing training for users of

computer technology, integrating technology in the classroom. The Technology Coordinator must provide training and technical assistance to staff in effectively utilizing a variety of technologies for communication and administration. Tech Coordinators may provide limited troubleshooting. The Technology Coordinator position is supported with foundation funding plus additional support in the ABE rates.

### **Performance Standards for all Community Adult Learning Centers**

The performance standards, informed by several years of data, are set at or near the Massachusetts state averages for performance in attendance, average attended hours, pre and post testing percentage, and learner gains. The performance standards encourage programs to work toward continuous improvement and effective program administration and therefore lead to successful student outcomes. See this link for further information about the Performance Standards.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/>

For programs that serve both ABE and ESOL populations, the performance standard to measure learning gains is calculated by a standard based on the distinct percentage of learning gains made by ESOL students (43%) and the distinct percentage of learning gains made by ABE students (34%).

### **Countable Outcomes/Goals**

Programs must have a student goal-setting process.

- Goal setting should be done with a staff member who is likely to have an ongoing relationship with the student (e.g., counselors, teachers).
- Goals must be determined by the student and negotiated with a staff member.
- Student goals must be recorded as articulated by the student and communicated to the staff member and student's teacher.
- Student goals must inform instruction and be incorporated into a program's curriculum development process.
- Student goals must be revisited with students on a regular basis.
- The attainment of a student's goal(s) must be documented according to the ESE's Countable Outcomes policy.

### **Student Assessment**

Programs must follow ACLS assessment policies and procedures as listed in the separate Assessment Policy and Procedure Manuals, available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/>, and in written communications from ACLS (e.g. Memos to Directors or Test Administrators, Assessment Updates in ACLS Monthly Mailings) at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/mailings/>.

- Programs are encouraged to have a written process for administering and scoring the required assessments for pre-and post-testing.
- Programs must document that procedures are followed to ensure consistent and accurate test administration and scoring.
- All staff administering and scoring assessments must have successfully completed training or recertification to administer and score the required tests and have documentation on file at their program site. A minimum of two staff members must be trained to administer and/or score the required assessments used by the program.

- Practitioners who have completed a MAPT training given by ACLS or SABES may train other colleagues at their program. Programs administering the MAPT must maintain at least two staff trained by SABES or ACLS staff at all times.
- The program must use required assessments (e.g., MAPT, BEST Plus, TABE forms 9/10 and TABE Clas-E) to document student learner gains.

Programs with specific specialties must use the required assessments listed below:

### Required Assessments to Report Learner Educational Gain

Program Type	Assessment To Use
Community Adult Learning Centers	MAPT
ABE Learners below GLE 2	TABE Forms 9/10, Level L
ABE Learners whose Goal is to Improve Writing Skills	TABE Forms 9/10, Language Complete Battery Subtest, Levels E, M, D, A
Adult Diploma Program	MAPT
Career Centers	TABE Forms 9/10, Levels L, E, M, D, A
Adult Basic Education for Incarcerated Adults	TABE Forms 9/10, Levels L, E, M, D, A
Distance Learning (ABE)	MAPT
Distance Learning (ESOL)	BEST Plus or TABE Clas-E
ESOL	BEST Plus or TABE Clas-E
ESOL Learners below SPL 2	BEST Plus or TABE Clas-E
Pre-Literacy ESOL for Levels 1, 2, and 3	BEST Plus or TABE Clas-E
Transitions	MAPT
Primary Instruction by Volunteers (LVM and English at Large Only)	LVM: MAPT English at Large: TABE Clas-E
Workplace Education (ABE)	MAPT or TABE Forms 9/10, Levels L, E, M, D, A
Workplace Education (ESOL)	BEST Plus or TABE Clas-E

- In the FY2006-FY2010 funding cycle, programs must conduct pre-and post-assessments for 66% to 76% of eligible students annually using designated ESE assessment procedures and follow ESE policies.

### Follow Up of Student Goals

Student outcomes reported for both learning gains and goal achievement must be based on valid data. Direct matching of SMARTT data with that of other agencies is considered to be the most valid data. With the student's written permission and provision of a social security number, the goals of entering

employment, retaining new employment, and retaining current employment can all be verified through data matching with the Department of Revenue; the goal of obtaining a GED can be verified directly with the GED Testing Service. For all other goals, programs are required to use the survey method to follow up on student goal achievement.

For guidance in following up with students using the survey method, please refer to the “Sample Local Follow-up Survey for Core Measures adapted for Massachusetts” at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/nrssurvey\\_followup.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/nrssurvey_followup.doc).

For definitions and documentation required to verify the achievement of each goal, please refer to ALCS’ Revised Goals Form 2010 at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smartt/forms/goals.doc>.

In summary:

- Programs must use the survey method to follow up on all goals with those students who have not provided a **social security number or who have provided a social security number but did not sign a release form**.
- Programs must use the survey method to follow up on the following goals with all students, regardless of whether the student has provided a social security number or signed a release form, **because data matching is not available** to verify these goals: obtain ADP, enter transitional education, complete transitional education, enter post-secondary education, retain in post-secondary education, enter occupational training, retain in occupational training, and complete occupational training.
- Programs are not required to survey **those students who have provided both a social security number AND a signed release form** to follow up on the goals that can be verified through data matching: enter employment/get a job, retain new employment, and retain current employment.
- Programs are not required to survey those students who have obtained a GED because data is matched regardless of whether or not SSN is provided.

Please note that programs are not allowed to pay the GED test fee for students using any federal or state grant funding.

Programs must follow up quarterly with students and former students to ascertain goal changes and achievements, using effective procedures. Programs must establish protocols for follow-up services, and assign staff to this function.

### **Program Design for Non-Rate Based Classes**

A maximum of 20%\* of the instructional funding can support non-rate based classes. All non-rate based classes must be cost-effective. Programs may use the rates as a guide. The primary purposes of non-rate based classes are 1) to provide supplemental instruction (e.g., computer instruction) to students enrolled in a rate-based class (supplemental) or 2) to provide instruction to targeted populations through stand-alone non-rate based classes (e.g., students in need of short-term instruction

in order to pass the GED tests). Following are the program design requirements for all non-rate based classes:

- All participating adult learners must be eligible to receive ABE services.
- Programs must maintain an enrollment of a minimum of eight adult learners per class.
- All adult learners participating in a non-rate based class must be pre-and post-tested following state assessment policies.

\*Note exception: A program offering nine hours or more of instruction per week may have more than 20% of its instructional funding supporting non-rate based classes.

### **Supplemental Non-Rate Based Classes**

Following are the program design requirements specific to **supplemental** non-rate based classes:

- All participating adult learners must be currently enrolled in rate-based ABE classes (see exception below for citizenship classes).
- Programs must provide non-rate based instruction that is directly tied to instructional activities conducted in the rate-based classes that the students attend.
- Supplemental non-rate based classes may be offered for less than five hours a week.
- Students from different level classes within the sequence of the required rate-base classes may be enrolled in the same non-rate based class where appropriate.
- Supplemental non-rate based classes include:
  - Writing
  - Math
  - Health Education
  - Computer Literacy
  - ESOL Conversation
  - Employability Skills
  - Parenting Support/Education
  - Interactive Literacy (formerly call Parent and Child Together/ PACT)
  - Drop-in Learning Center
  - Citizenship - No less than 75% of the learners in the citizenship class must be enrolled in the program.
  - Next Steps
  - Distance Learning (Available for programs with the distance learning component).

### **Two Types of Stand-Alone Non-Rate Based Classes**

The first type of stand-alone classes is the GED/Content area. This class is for students who are in need of short-term instruction (at least 12 hours) in one or two content areas in order to successfully complete the GED tests. Eligible students must be functioning at a pre-ASE/ASE level.

The second type of stand-alone class is the Drop in Learning Center. Programs are encouraged to develop placement criteria to identify those students who would benefit from a drop-in service. The Drop-in Learning Centers must use ABE /ESOL content as the base for instruction.

The program design requirements specific to the **stand-alone** non-rate based classes (GED/Content Area Classes and Drop-in Learning Centers) are as follows:

- Eligible students include both students enrolled in a core ESE-funded ABE class and students not enrolled in a core ABE class.
- Programs do not have to offer a sequence of three classes.
- Instruction must be offered a minimum of five hours per week and be of sufficient duration (e.g., 10-12 week cycles) to ensure that students can achieve their goals.
- Stand-alone non-rate based programs/classes must follow the same policy requirements as all other ESE-funded ABE/ESOL programs, including goal setting/countable outcomes and assessments.



## **Program and Staff Development**

## **Program Development / Continuous Improvement Planning**

ACLS requires that each program engage annually in a formal planning process for continuous improvement. (The terms Program Development/Program Continuous Improvement Planning may be used interchangeably.) The overall goal of continuous improvement planning, or program development, is to ensure the program is offering high quality services to students to assist them in meeting their goals. Program development activities must focus on the infrastructure that comprises the systems or components that make up the whole program.

The continuous improvement planning process must be purposeful and intentional, as well as ongoing and systematic, in order that a program continually evaluates its efforts to improve its services. A program with a planning process in place is better able to respond to changing community needs and demographics, new initiatives, trends in technology, staff turnover, etc. Key steps in the continuous improvement planning process include:

- Assess program needs/strengths (The process looks at each component and the interrelationship of components within the program, e.g. intake, orientation, curriculum development, instruction, assessment, counseling, instruction, follow-up, etc.)
- Define and prioritize goals for program improvement, based on needs
- Develop a continuous improvement (action/work) plan to meet goal (s) that incorporate individual staff development plans.
- Engage in activities to implement the plan in order to meet those goals and document these efforts
- Evaluate efforts and progress (e.g., the effectiveness of the plan, making revisions as needed).

The activities listed above constitute a cycle of planning that guides the process of continuous improvement from one year to the next. The steps may be simple or involved. For example, the “assess program needs/strengths” step may be as straightforward as asking, “what is needed?” A more elaborate approach might involve a staff retreat, outside consultants, and a year-long extensive data collection activity. Large and small programs alike make these determinations based on their individual philosophies, identified goals, staffing and the resources at their disposal.

Planning for continuous program improvement should incorporate throughout a process for collecting and using data: from assessing program needs and strengths and identifying goals, to evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, revising the plan, and modifying goals or identifying new goals. The plan must include a staff review of Cognos data (among other data), and all staff must meet at least quarterly to analyze data that affect daily operations, program planning, and continuous improvement. In addition, minimally twice per year, staff must review data, including Cognos data, specific to continuous program improvement.

Because the full impact of the program and staff development efforts can best be achieved when the two are joined systematically, professional development plans for individual staff members should be aligned with program development goals. See the section on “Integrated Program and Staff Development Planning,” below, for more information about aligning program and staff development.

The value of the planning process depends on the extent to which the plan is used by program staff. The plan must be documented, shared, and discussed with all staff. Programs must have regularly (at least quarterly) scheduled staff meetings that allow for the maximum possible participation of both full and part time staff, and must document these meetings with minutes.

### **Continuous Improvement Planning and the Performance Standards**

In assessing program strengths and needs, each program should review their performance relative to the performance standards.

Over the past several years, ACLS has worked with the field to develop performance standards for community adult learning centers. These include: attendance, average hours of participation, learning gains, pre-and post-test rate, the achievement of student goals, and completion of a federal National Reporting System (NRS) educational functioning level. The performance standards and related information can be found at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/fc340\\_345\\_359.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/fc340_345_359.html).

Recognizing the uniqueness of education in correctional settings, ACLS has worked with the programs receiving funding for Adult Basic Education for Incarcerated Adults to develop performance standards that reflect the educational opportunities provided in correctional settings. These include: attendance, learning gains, pre-and post-test rate, the achievement of student goals, and completion of an NRS educational functioning level. The performance standards for ABE for Incarcerated Adults programs and related information can be found at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/fy09fc285\\_563perfstand.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/pawg/fy09fc285_563perfstand.doc).

### **Annual Continuous Improvement Plans**

Every Community Adult Learning Center and ABE for Incarcerated Adults grantee (Fund Codes 285, 340, 345, 359, and 563) is required to annually document the continuous improvement planning process described above in a Continuous Improvement Plan, using one of the two formats developed by SABES, and submit the Plan to their ACLS Program Specialist in the fall. The two formats are available in the SABES publication entitled *Planning for Program Improvement: A Manual for ABE Programs*, available at: <http://www.sabes.org/resources/planningmanualept2006.pdf>. Note that what is labeled as an “action plan” in the manual is the format that should be used for the Continuous Improvement Plan.

Any program that has not met one or more of the performance standards must address how it plans to improve its performance relative to those standards in the Continuous Improvement Plan. For example, if a program has 64% attendance rate, it has have not met the performance standard, and at least one goal in the program’s action plan must address improving attendance. However, if that same program has a 75% pre-and post-test rate, it is not necessary for the program to address the pre-and post-test standard in its plan.

If a program has not met three or more of the performance standards, the program should contact its Program Specialist before developing the Continuous Improvement Plan. The Program Specialist and

the program will negotiate which performance standards will be addressed in the development of the Continuous Improvement Plan.

A program that has met all of the performance standards is required to submit a Continuous Improvement Plan annually; however, the program is not required to address the performance standards, but may address the areas of improvement that it has identified through its planning and evaluation process.

### **Support Available to Programs in Continuous Improvement Planning**

Programs that may need guidance in completing their plans are strongly encouraged to attend trainings offered by SABES in its *Planning for Continuous Improvement* series (see *Program Planning* under “Recommended Trainings” at the end of this section. *Planning for Continuous Improvement (PCI)* is now offered in modules, in both face-to-face and online formats, so that practitioners may have access to training that is customized to their programs. Directors may select any or all of the following modules according to their respective program needs: *Fundamentals of Data*, *Using Program Performance Data*, *The Planning Process*, and *Writing the Continuous Improvement Plan*. Directors are strongly encouraged to attend these PCI modules with a team of staff members from their programs, including the Program/Staff Development Facilitator and others who are key to the continuous improvement planning process. All of these modules can be found on the on-line SABES calendar at <http://calendar.sabes.org/>.

The ABE rates provide funding equal to the cost of 3.5% of total staff hours, in order to enable a limited number of staff to lead or conduct the program development activities that are identified in the Continuous Improvement Plan. These staff hours are designated on the program’s (SMARTT) staffing chart.

### **Staff Development for Each Staff Member**

Every staff member in a program, e.g., teachers, support staff, counselor, director, no matter how experienced, must engage in professional development activities. (The terms “staff development” and “professional development” may be used interchangeably.)

Each program must identify a Staff Development Facilitator (P/SD) to assist staff in their staff development planning. The program director and Program/Professional Development Facilitator work together to ensure that the program uses a continuous planning process that links program goals with individual professional development plans, and that is reviewed annually. The P/SD Facilitator will ensure that information regarding professional development opportunities, including ACLS mailings, the SABES calendar, and other resources, are shared with all staff. The P/SD Facilitator is also responsible for developing a system to track the hours spent on these activities. The P/SD Facilitator position is supported by foundation funding plus additional support in the rates.

Many different kinds of activities can be considered as staff development (not only workshops), so that staff may study, practice and reflect in the process of acquiring new skills and or knowledge. Some examples of these types of staff development activities include: reading and applying the Curriculum

Frameworks to curriculum and instruction, peer coaching, study circles, teacher research, mini-courses and institutes, reading, visiting another program to learn new practices, etc. Staff development hours must be entered in the professional development database in SMARTT.

The steps recommended earlier in this section for the continuous improvement planning apply as well as an individual staff member creates a staff development plan. Annually, each staff member must:

- Assess his/her needs for professional development.
- Set and prioritize goals for each year's staff development.
- Create an individual staff development plan. The plan should address the individual staff member's goals for professional development and also align with the program's improvement goals.
- Engage in the selected staff development activity.
- Evaluate and document the staff development effort and activity

### **Flexible Distribution of Staff Development Hours**

ACLS grants provide funding to support professional development activities for every staff member in an amount equal to 2.5% of each full-time or part-time staff member's time or 12 hours, whichever is greater. For example, a full time staff member working 40 hours/week throughout the year receives support for 52 hours of staff/professional development each year. This 2.5%/12-hour minimum of staff development time is in addition to the 15-hour *Foundations for New Staff* (formerly *New Staff Orientation*) required in the first year of hire. The program must make time available for staff development activities by providing substitute teachers or using other strategies to ensure that staff have access to development opportunities.

Although the formula for *funding* staff development hours has not changed, ACLS now allows flexibility in the *distribution* of those hours to each staff member. Beginning FY2012, Program Directors may pool the number of professional development hours funded by the grant and then allocate those hours to staff members based on assessment of individual knowledge, experience, expertise and need. Programs must assure that:

- each staff person has an individual professional development plan and the opportunity to participate in at least 12 paid hours of professional development annually;
- the total professional development hours generated by the ABE rates system will be utilized to compensate staff for time spent participating in professional development and will be reported in SMARTT; and
- any professional development hours (provided in the grant) above the minimum of 12 hours per individual must be used to support professional development and should be distributed among program staff based on the need to improve student outcomes and support program improvement goals.

Note also that ACLS requires that programs keep a record of professional development hours for each staff member, but leaves to the discretion of the programs the method for calculating those hours. For example, some programs may wish to include travel or lunch time in the professional development

hours, while others may not. The amount of hours to be entered into the SMARTT system should be based on program policy for paid professional development time.

### **Integrated Program and Staff Development Planning**

Every program benefits from efforts to improve its own systems as well as individual staff members' skills and knowledge. A structured process, however, is needed to help the program and the individual staff manage these efforts to ensure that they are working toward a common goal or purpose. The full impact of the program and staff development efforts can best be achieved when the two are joined systematically. The Program Director and the P/SD Facilitator should work together to ensure that the program uses a continuous improvement planning process that deliberately links program continuous improvement goals with the individual staff members' staff development goals.

### **Pre and Post Planning Time**

Programs must provide 2-4 weeks of paid time for teachers to devote to issues of planning and development during weeks that classes are not in session. It is recommended that staff use this time to address programmatic issues. These activities may include: review and document curriculum aligned with the ABE Frameworks; improve learning gains, instruction, student retention, attendance and/or other program related activities.

### **Required Training for Staff**

#### **Orientation for New Staff Members**

A program must offer each new staff person an orientation to the program. The program-based orientation must include an overview of the program's philosophy, services, goals, policies and procedures and of ACLS requirements, including the ABE Guidelines. Additionally, all staff must receive an employee policies and procedures handbook that addresses key employee issues such as absenteeism, travel reimbursement, benefits, ADA policies, grievance procedures, performance appraisal, expectations for staff behavior, working hours, professional development, and benefits.

All administrators and direct service staff hired in a ESE-funded ABE program are required to complete the **SABES Foundations for New Staff: Overview of the ABE Field (formerly New Staff Orientation or NSO)**, with two exceptions: 1) A new staff member who possesses a certificate of completion from having taken *Foundations* or *NSO* through employment in a prior job (in another ESE-funded program) does not need to complete it again, 2) and a new administrator with experience in the ESE-funded ABE system (e.g., in a different role) may have the SABES orientation requirement waived. Data entry staff and other non-direct service staff are encouraged but not required to attend.

Direct service staff members are required to complete *Foundations for New Staff: Overview of the ABE Field* in the first 12 months of employment. However, since all directors must complete the New Directors' Orientation in their first 12 months, those directors who also need to complete *Foundations* have up to 18 months to do so.

The first module in the *Foundations for New Staff* professional development series provides a broad introduction to the Adult Basic Education system in Massachusetts and an overview of the field. Later

modules focus on specific job roles such as teaching and advising. For example, the workshop entitled *Foundations: The Art of Teaching* includes components on adult developmental and learning theory, contextualized instruction, integration of learner goals into the classroom, curriculum frameworks and professional standards, among other content. SABES offers the orientation at least once in each region each year. Participants may register for sessions that best meet their scheduling needs, even if those sessions are offered in other regions.

### **ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Training**

ADA Coordinators must attend at least one ADA training each year. SABES Regional Support Centers and ACLS provide trainings. For more information see the ADA Compliance Section, in the “Administration” section of these Guidelines.

### **Required Training for Directors**

#### **New Directors’ Orientation**

Within their first 12 months of employment, all directors to ESE-funded ABE programs must complete a New Directors Orientation, offered each fall by ACLS. Programs are strongly encouraged to also send Coordinators and Assistant Directors.

The New Directors’ Orientation provides an overview of the Massachusetts ABE system, including the Guidelines for Effective ABE and the Indicators of ABE Program Quality, ESE requirements and performance standards for ABE programs and how programs are monitored, issues related to program management, accountability and educational leadership, and the resources and supports available to Mass. ABE directors.

It will be helpful, if scheduling permits, for a director to have completed the New Directors’ Orientation before beginning the ABE Program Design training, described below. (However, no director should postpone taking ABE Program Design if s/he has not yet been able to complete this Orientation.)

#### **System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT): SMARTT New User, SMARTT Refresher/Updates, and Cognos trainings**

The 3-hour SMARTT New User workshop, provided throughout the year by each SABES regional center, provides a hands-on introduction to Massachusetts’ web-based ABE student database MIS reporting system: The System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology, or SMARTT. The New User training provides an introduction to SMARTT features and how SMARTT is used for accountability and program management; it is required for all new users of the SMARTT system. Cognos workshops cover accessing, filtering and exporting SMARTT data and creating reports.

Directors need proficiency in using SMARTT in order to prepare and submit a program design annually, and in Cognos in order to review and analyze their performance data. It will be helpful, if scheduling permits, for a director to have completed the SMARTT New User training before beginning ABE Program Design. (However, no director should postpone taking ABE Program Design if s/he has not yet been able to complete SMARTT training.)

ESE programs are required to maintain at all times a minimum of two staff proficient in using SMARTT and Cognos. Programs must send two staff members (who have regular SMARTT responsibilities) to required SMARTT and Cognos trainings, including refresher/update trainings as needed in order to stay current with changes. In addition to the director, most programs choose as the second trained person a support staff person who then usually becomes the primary data entry person. Programs are required to send new people for training whenever turnover of trained staff necessitates.

### **ABE Program Design**

The application process for both new and continuation ABE funding from ESE requires the applicant to utilize the tools in SMARTT to develop a program plan. The ABE Program Design training is designed to enable participants to develop a fundable plan, using SMARTT, which is consistent with the MA Guidelines for Effective ABE and ESE policy requirements.

All Directors and other staff who may be required to enter program plans into SMARTT (e.g., site coordinators, assistant directors) must complete this four-day training within her/his first 12 months of hire. It will be helpful, if scheduling permits, for a director to have completed both the New Directors' Orientation and the SMARTT New User training before beginning ABE Program Design. (However, no director should postpone taking ABE Program Design if s/he has not yet been able to complete these other trainings.)

### **Recommended Staff Trainings**

#### **Planning for Continuous Improvement**

All directors should consider the *Planning for Continuous Improvement (PCI)* mini-course after they have completed the basic requirements identified above. Although *PCI* is not required training, it is designed to help programs fulfill their Program Development/ Continuous Improvement Planning requirements (described in the Program Development / Continuous Improvement Planning section above) in a way that effectively meets the needs of students and staff. *Planning for Continuous Improvement (PCI)* is now offered in modules, in both face-to-face and online formats, so that practitioners may have access to training that is customized to their programs. Directors may select any or all of the following modules according to their respective program needs: *Fundamentals of Data*, *Using Program Performance Data*, *The Planning Process*, and *Writing the Continuous Improvement Plan*. Directors are strongly encouraged to attend these PCI modules with a team of staff members from their programs, including the Program/Staff Development Facilitator and others who are key to the continuous improvement planning process. It will be helpful, if scheduling permits, for a director to have completed some Cognos training before beginning to take the *PCI* modules.

All of the trainings described above, with the exception of the New Directors' Orientation, can be found on the on-line SABES calendar at <http://calendar.sabes.org/>. The New Directors' Orientation is offered annually through ACLS.

#### **Non-SABES/ESE Professional Development**

For ACLS purposes, professional development (PD) is defined as a structured learning activity that is designed to strengthen the skills and/or knowledge needed by individual practitioners to perform



effectively in their program staff role/s. The terms “professional development” and “staff development” may be used interchangeably.

Although the two are closely related, staff development differs from program development because it focuses on the needs of *individuals* to improve their work in a system instead of on *systems* needed to sustain a program.

Many different kinds of activities “count” as staff development—not just workshops—so that staff members may study, practice and reflect in the process of acquiring new skills or knowledge. Examples of *staff development* activities include peer coaching, study circles, teacher research, mini-courses and institutes, and visits to another program to learn new practices. Examples of *program development* activities that do not count as staff development are activities to develop and implement the program’s continuous improvement plan and team meetings to work on curriculum. For more information, refer to pages 16 & 17.

### **Instructions for Entering Professional Development Hours in SMARTT**

Non-SABES/ESE professional development is that which relates directly to an individual’s staff position, but is offered by providers other than SABES or ESE. ESE-sponsored training, such as the New Directors’ Orientation, is entered into SMARTT by ESE, and SABES enters all participation in SABES-sponsored events. The ABE program is responsible for entering staff professional development activity other than that provided by SABES or ESE. The “Add Non-SABES PD” screen can be found through the Staff PD link in the Staff Information screen in SMARTT.

Professional development that is unrelated to a person’s ABE/ESOL staff role should not be entered in the SMARTT database. Practitioners may work with their Program and Staff Development Facilitators or supervisors to determine the connection of their PD activities to their job responsibilities; and Program Directors should decide on the appropriateness of the PD as it relates to program development goals. For more information, refer to the “Program and Staff Development” section on pages 30 & 31.

Some examples of ineligible activities that have been listed in SMARTT as non-SABES/ESE PD include meetings with supervisors, ESE monitoring exit meetings, staff meetings, the annual ABE Directors’ Meeting, and a yoga class. These activities are not considered staff development because they involve no structured learning activity, or they focus on program- or state-level issues rather than on individual staff needs, or they do not relate to an ESE staff role.

For additional information or clarification, please contact your Program Specialist or your regional SABES office.

# **Administration**

## Administration

ESE Program Directors are expected to implement these guidelines. All ESE-funded ABE programs must have written personnel and administrative policies and procedures in place to ensure efficient and effective service delivery and to guarantee fiscal accountability.

## Educational Leadership

Grantees must provide for sufficient program administration and educational leadership. A program coordinator/director operating a minimum size grant of \$100,000 must commit a minimum of fifteen (15) hours/week to these functions.

The Director is responsible for the overall coordination, administration, and educational leadership of the adult education program. The Director oversees the hiring, training and supervision of all staff, provides written job descriptions, policy manuals, mission statement, and organizational chart to all staff. The demographics of the program staff reflect the ethnicity, linguistic and cultural background of the student population. Interview/hiring teams include key stakeholders (e.g., student and staff representation). The Director is responsible for grant writing, and preparing reports and statistics to ESE, as well as for sharing the monthly mailings with all staff.

The program must have an organizational chart that includes the umbrella organization as well as the entire ABE program.

The Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Facilitates effective program development activities in accordance with program needs and leads the process to set program goals and program improvement goals.
- Collaboratively designs a staff development program in accordance with program needs; integrates program and staff development and works closely with the program's staff and program development facilitator.
- Is responsible for overall fiscal oversight and ensures that expenditures are allowable and appropriate and that allocated funds are available throughout the fiscal year.
- Performs SMARTT Program Planning.
- Ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Oversees curriculum design and development and ensures that program curricula and instruction are aligned with the ABE Curriculum Frameworks and particularly with the learning standards and benchmarks in the Frameworks.

Instructional processes and strategies must be based on research in adult learning and development. Student goal-setting and the assessment of student learning are part of the curricula design. The Director's role in ensuring a strong curriculum aligned with the Curriculum Frameworks is guiding instruction and is an institutional priority.

**Refer to these three excellent resources for Program Administrators:**  
[www.sabes.org](http://www.sabes.org)  
***SABES Planning for Program Improvement: A Manual for Adult Basic Education Programs.***

***SABES Program and Staff Development Process: A Guidebook for Facilitators.***

***Program Administrators' Sourcebook: A Resource on NCSALL's Research for Adult Education Program Administrators.***

- Oversees the quality of lesson plans and the plans' adherence to the "Basics of Writing Lesson Plans for ABE/ESOL Classes". The Program Director is also responsible for ensuring that teachers are producing written lesson plans at the expected rate (e.g. one lesson plan per class, or per week; see page 21).
- Conducts staff evaluations or assigns a qualified staff person annually at a minimum, including classroom observations, written feedback and follow up for instructional staff.
- Maintains a time and effort record for each staff person.
- Maintains current written job descriptions for each job category of the ABE program.
- Oversees student outreach, intake, orientation and recruitment policies.
- Provides ongoing staff supervision.
- Promotes clear procedures for collecting, documenting, analyzing and reporting data. The Director also promotes the use of data for program improvement and accountability. The Director must establish and maintain an effective record-keeping system.
- Works with staff to develop systems and protocols for evaluating the program.
- Participates in the New Directors' orientation within a year of hiring.
- Oversees community planning activities.
- Attends the annual ABE Directors' Meeting.

### **Program Governance**

Programs must provide documented accountability to an active governing board which has general decision making authority, including fiduciary responsibility for the organization, and whose membership is different from and not related to the program's operating staff. In the case of private, non-profit organizations, the Governing Board must have documented protocols for hiring and evaluating the executive director, and for checks and balances on the director's policy and decision making authority; for example, these written procedures must specify at what amount checks must be co-signed by a member of the Governing Board. In the case of public agencies, the Governing Board and related protocols requirements are fulfilled by public oversight mechanisms such as school committees, trustees, etc.

### **Program Governance: Tiered Accountability**

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) uses a tiered framework for accountability and assistance based on program performance as measured by six performance standards. Mirroring the accountability framework used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to measure the performance of school districts, the ABE accountability framework is based on quantitative data and targeted assistance for underperforming programs. Program, class and student level data is collected and analyzed through the System for Managing Accountability and Results Through Technology (SMARTT) and the Cognos Reporting system.

### **Performance Standards**

The Performance standards which have been informed by statistical analysis of multiple years of data are set at or near the Massachusetts state average for performance include the following:

- Attendance
- Student participation
- Learning gains as measured by significant gain on standardized tests

- Pre/post assessment rate
- Goal achievement (e.g. employment, citizenship, enter post-secondary education)
- Learning gains as measured by USDOE educational functioning levels

Each performance standard is assigned from three to nine points for a possible total of 25 points per year. Based on the program's total number of points, they are assigned to one of four levels of performance (Advanced – Tier 1, Meets Standard – Tier 2, Needs Improvement – Tier 3 and Remedial Action Required – Tier 4).

### **Consequences of Underperformance**

- All programs in Tier 4 (or those programs with less than 14 out of 25 performance points in a year) receive program based technical assistance.
- Underperforming is defined as those programs which have been in Tier 4 for two years in a funding cycle and are not currently in Tier 1 or 2. Both Tier 1 and 2 programs are programs which achieve outcomes that are above the state average.
- Performance will play a key role in the next open and competitive process for FY13-FY17. In FY2012, significant points should be assigned to performance and need. Based on a total score of 100, 35 points will be assigned based on performance and 15 points will be assigned based on need in the community.

### **Adult Basic Education (ABE) Advisory Council**

Programs must have an ABE Advisory Council made up of a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., students, volunteers, community members). This Council should play an active role to support the program's ability to meet its goals and to contribute to the program's success. The Advisory Council is separate from any governing board, Board of Directors or Community Planning Partnership. Although ESE will not approve having a program's governing board also serve as the ABE Advisory Council, a subcommittee of the community planning partnership may function as the Advisory Council, provided they keep separate minutes and spend separate time focusing on the ABE program. Students participating on the Advisory Council must be provided with training and support. The council must reflect the many needs and interests of the local community. The Advisory Council must meet at least three times per year and programs must maintain meeting minutes.

### **Annual ABE Directors' Meeting**

The annual ABE Directors' Meeting, sponsored by ACLS, provides opportunities for MA ABE Directors to learn about policy updates and to provide feedback. Programs must send two representatives to the Annual ABE Directors' Meeting. The Director must attend both days. The second representative may be the same or different staff each day.

## Staff Compensation

ACLS is committed to ensuring that all staff members at all ESE-funded ABE programs are paid at least at the salary rate supported by the ESE rates. This applies to staff hours paid with Direct and Indirect funds as well as hours that are used as Match to the ESE grant.

Programs must provide a competitive package of salary and benefits that will attract and retain highly qualified and experienced staff.

- The ABE Rates System supports an hourly rate for professional services staff (P) of **\$18.54** *plus fringe benefits valued at 25%* **\$23.17** for those staff not receiving benefits. This results in a “contact hour rate” of **\$34.77**.
- The ABE Rates System supports an hourly rate for administrators (A) of **\$25.50** *plus fringe benefits valued at 25%* **\$31.87** for those staff not receiving benefits.
- The ABE Rates System supports an hourly rate for support/clerical staff (S) of **\$13.91** *plus fringe benefits valued at 25%* **\$17.39** for those staff not receiving benefits.

Programs must provide paid preparation time for instructional staff. The rates support teaching time to prep time at a rate of 2:1 (teaching to prep time). The recommended range is 1:1 to 4:1 (teaching to prep time). Paid prep time is not required when the hourly rate paid by programs meets or exceeds the rate system's **contact hour rate (\$34.77)**.

## Staff Salary Analysis

The Staff Salary Analysis figures indicate the difference between the amount the program is spending and the amount the ESE rates support. These figures are found on the Staff Salary Analysis screen in SMARTT. Programs must ensure that the Staff Salary Analysis is within an Allowable Range of +/- 3% of the ESE approved rate per staff category (Administrative, Professional, and Support).

- If the amount is more than 3% below the allowable range per category (A, P, S) the program is not spending what the ABE rates support for salaries. The grant award will be lowered if programs choose not to use all funds allocated to them according to ESE rates. The grant award will be lowered by the difference between the program total and the ESE rates total of each applicable category.
- If the amount is more than 3% above the allowable range per category the program is spending more than what the ABE rates support for salaries. Matching funds (above the minimum required 20%) and/or Unrestricted funds must account for the difference. The Matching funds should provide salaries and may also include funds for space costs and other rates supported costs. The Match Narrative must document clearly what role in the ABE program each matching staff person plays, the value that is added to the program by the match items, and the source of matching funds.

### **SMARTT Staff Plans and Corresponding Budgets**

All staff hours that are paid out of Direct, Indirect and Non-ESE matching funds must be entered into the SMARTT Staff Plans and also appear on the corresponding lines on each budget narrative and budget detail pages. The SMARTT Staff Plans, budget narrative and detail budget pages must reflect accurate hourly salaries and accurate fringe *offered to* each staff person. The fringe rate on the staffing chart and in the budget must reflect the agency's policy on benefits and the amount the agency is prepared to pay for fringe, using Direct, Indirect, or Matching (Non- ESE) funds. For example, if part-time staff members are eligible to receive 10% benefits and full-time staff members are eligible to receive 25% benefits, the staff plan and budgets will reflect these separate fringe amounts that are offered to each staff person. Programs may not list an average of benefits for all staff. Benefits may include FICA, unemployment insurance, workers compensation, pensions, health insurance, etc.

While an agency may have its own salary/staffing structure, for the purposes of grant funds received by ESE, staff should be recorded (in the SMARTT Staffing Plan and on the budget) as Administrator (A), Professional (P) and Support (S) according to the following guidelines/definitions.

- Administrator (A): Directors, Coordinators and any other staff who have overall supervising and administration responsibilities
- Professional (P): Teachers, Educational Counselors/ADA Coordinators, Technology Coordinators, Program and Staff Development Facilitators, Community Planners
- Support (S): Data Entry Staff, Clerical Staff, Support Staff

### **Other Rates Supported Costs for All Staff**

The ESE rates support three weeks vacation per year for every full time, grant funded staff person.

If the entity pays vacation time to part time employees, then vacation time can be paid from the ESE grant for part time, grant funded staff persons based on the proportion of their actual time worked on the grant compared to their full time counterparts.

If a grant funded employee ceases employment, by whatever method (resignation, retirement, termination, etc.), directly charged lump sum compensated absences payments to the grant are not allowable for federal grants. Additionally, state funded grants do not allow grant charges that occur under similar circumstances. For more information on the federal regulations, please refer to OMB circular A-87, Attachment B, Section 8, part d (3) or by OMB circular A-122, Attachment B, Section 8, part k (2) (a).

### **Documentation of Services**

Programs must maintain accurate documentation for all required and agreed to services.

- An updated ABE staffing chart or equivalent documentation must be maintained on site to provide accurate details of how staff resources are assigned to all essential ABE program functions.

- Programs must be able to demonstrate that required functions are provided according to the approved budget (e.g., counseling, program and staff development).
- Program must be able to account for set aside funds (e.g., space, childcare).
- Programmatic and fiscal data collection and reporting systems are official records. Falsification of any required documentation or report may be grounds for immediate termination of the grant, return of grant funds and/or prosecution.
- Programs must maintain both programmatic and fiscal records for seven years. Programmatic records include, but are not limited to SMARTT intake forms, goals information sheets, educational counseling notes, meeting minutes.

## **Policies and Procedures to Ensure Data Quality**

In the coming years, ABE program performance, measured against state standards with data entered in SMARTT, will have an increasing impact on both a program's success in competing for funds and whether its funding is continued throughout a multi-year funding cycle. All ESE-funded programs are responsible for collecting required information and reporting it to the Department in a timely manner. With increasing focus on outcomes over process, it becomes progressively more important that the quality of this data across the state is consistent and accurate. The Department relies on three main strategies for ensuring data quality: timely data entry, each program's assurance that data quality measures are in place, and data audits.

### **Timely Data Entry**

A key principle for assuring data quality is to ensure that data is reported in a timely manner according to a fixed, regular schedule. If the time lag for reporting data is too long, the likelihood of missing, and possibly inaccurate, data increases.

ESE strongly recommends that data be entered into SMARTT on a weekly basis, and requires that it be brought up to date at least monthly. Beginning in September 2010, no more than one additional month will be allowed for extenuating circumstances. Accordingly, enrollment and attendance data entry for each month will be closed off permanently by the last day of the second succeeding month, and will not be allowed to be entered retroactively. Further, there will be no opportunity to delete enrollments and re-enter data later in the year.

For example, enrollments and attendance from September are expected to be entered during October, and (in order to accommodate extenuating circumstances that may cause an unavoidable delay) will continued to be accepted in November, but will not be accepted after November 30 for any reason. All enrollments and attendance from October are expected to be entered during November, but will not be accepted after December 31, enrollments and attendance from November will not be accepted after January 31, etc.

The only exception is data from the summer months. Because the first "data lock-out" date will be October 31, there will be an additional month available for July data. Nevertheless, the requirement is still that data will be kept current by updating it no less frequently than monthly.



Repeated instances of failure to submit timely and accurate programmatic data will have a negative impact on a program's performance points, and may result in a suspension of further payments.

### **Requirement to Maintain a Minimum of Two Staff in Data Entry**

To ensure the capacity of programs to meet this requirement, all ESE-funded ABE/ESOL programs are required maintain at all times a minimum of two staff proficient in using SMARTT and Cognos. Each program must send two staff members to required SMARTT and Cognos trainings, including refresher/update trainings as needed, in order to stay current with changes. Each program must also send new people for training whenever staff turnover necessitates. Temporary unavailability of a primary data entry person due to illness or staff turnover will not excuse the requirement to keep data current. Therefore, it is in the program's best interest to ensure that both individuals trained to enter data in SMARTT maintain their facility by actually doing so on a regular schedule and ongoing basis, and/or to have more than two people trained.

### **Assurance of Data Quality Measures**

The data collected at the program and reported in SMARTT are official records and, as such, must be accurate, valid, and reliable. Each state is required by the federal government to attest annually that it has policies and procedures in place to ensure the quality of the state's data, outlined in a "Data Quality Checklist" signed by the State Director of Adult Education and submitted with the state's final report. Many states require local providers to sign a similar set of assurances.

Beginning in FY 2011, the Department will require a signed assurance from each recipient of funds under any grant program that has performance standards to confirm that policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of the local data submitted in SMARTT, and to address any weakness in this area. This assurance will be provided by completing a "Data Quality Checklist," and submitting it at the end of the fiscal year, when the data is being rolled over to the new fiscal year. This requirement will apply to recipients of funding under the Community Adult Learning Centers program, the ABE for Incarcerated Adults program, and the Even Start program (Fund Codes 340, 345, 359, 285, 563, and 304).

### **Data Audits**

To further ensure that the data reported in SMARTT is accurate, the Department intends to continue to select a number of programs each year for data audits.

Any submission of data/information that can reasonably be determined to be known by the recipient, or that should have been known by the grant recipient, to be false is grounds for immediate termination of the grant and the return of all grant funds related to the falsified data/information.

The purpose of these measures -- the Timely Data Entry Policy, the Data Quality Checklist, and Data Audits -- is to ensure that Massachusetts ABE data is accurate, and that the system is fair -- that all programs are playing on a level field and accurately reflecting student participation in a consistent manner.

## **Required Reporting**

Programs must submit timely and accurate reports. Examples of these reports include the Standard Application for Grants, amendment requests, final financial reports, continuous improvement planning reports, etc.

- The Department encourages weekly data entry in the System for Managing Accountability Through Technology (SMARTT), but requires that it be brought up to date monthly.
- Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports may result in a suspension of further payments until the ESE receives accurate and complete reports.

**Indicators of Program Quality** –See attachment A on page 64.

## **Required Staff Trainings**

The Administrator is responsible for making sure staff development requirements are fulfilled. For more information, see the Program and Staff Development section.

## **Program Planning**

- See the Program and Staff Development section.

## **Community Planning**

All ESE-funded programs in a community will participate in one ABE Community Partnership in that community. Allocations for community planning in ESE-funded programs are as follows:

- If the program is the only ESE-funded program in the community it will receive \$10,250.
- If there are multiple ESE-funded programs in a community, each program will receive \$6,150.
- If an ESE-funded program is in Boston, each program will receive \$6,150 of which \$2,050 will support the citywide initiative through its fiscal agent, Jobs and Community Services, a Division of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Programs will retain \$4,100 for community planning purposes within the neighborhoods they serve.

Programs must be part of a community planning partnership that is working towards the following goals:

- To ensure that the needs of all undereducated and/or limited English proficient constituencies are accounted for, and that strategic plans are developed that identify how and when every such constituency will ultimately be served.
- To ensure that every organization with an interest in, and the potential for, supporting services to these populations is included in such planning, and that protocols are established to coordinate these services.
- To ensure that students benefit from the broadest possible array of education, employment and training, health and human services that so many students need in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations.
- To ensure that adult basic education takes its place as a key ingredient in every organization, community's and region's plans to improve the quality of life.

For more information about Community Planning, see the Community Planning Guidelines on the ACLS website. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acsl/mailings/2005/1111/cpguidelines.doc>

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is a comprehensive federal civil rights law that was enacted on July, 26 1990 to ensure that the civil rights of persons with disabilities were not violated through the use of discriminatory practices in employment, public services, public accommodations and communications. The ADA also protects people who are not disabled, but may be discriminated against because of their association with a person that is disabled. For example, a person cannot be denied employment because s/he provides care for a spouse or child with a disability. An employer cannot assume that because a person is a caregiver of a person with a disability s/he will be an unreliable employee. As a provider of services to the public, each ESE-funded program is obligated to provide reasonable access to services for all persons. In an effort to ensure that all ABE programs are responsive to adult learners with disabilities, the Department requires that each ABE program have an ADA Coordinator whose primary role is to ensure that the program is in compliance with ADA.

The Department requires that ABE programs adhere to the ten standards listed below. For a comprehensive explanation of each standard, please see the Disability Guidelines webpage at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acsls/disability/default.html>

1. **ADA Coordinator:** Designate a responsible person to be the program ADA Coordinator. This person will be responsible for ensuring that the program is in compliance with ADA requirements. He/She will make sure the program is accessible, and that policies and practices do not discriminate against students with disabilities.
2. **Public Notice:** The public notice articulates a program's commitment to adhering to the ADA requirements. The public notice must be posted in a prominent location at the program.
3. **Grievance Procedure:** The grievance procedure may be used by a student who wishes to file a complaint alleging the ABE program has discriminated against him/her on the basis of disability in the policies, practices or the provision of services, and activities. The grievance procedure must be posted in a prominent location at the program.
4. **Conduct a Self-Evaluation:** A one-time self-evaluation is an opportunity for a program to review its policies and practices to ensure that they are inclusive and non-discriminatory. When a program moves to another facility, a new self-evaluation is required.
5. **Transition Plan:** A transition plan for barrier removal is required when a program identifies a barrier that prevents access to any area of the program (i.e. no ramp, no accessible parking, heavy doors, etc.).
6. **Letter of Commitment:** A letter of commitment must be submitted each year along with the ADA Checklist. This letter formally states that the program will adhere to the requirements set forth by the ADA.
7. **Training of Staff:** The ADA Coordinator is expected to provide ADA training to new staff at orientation and to all program staff at least once a year.
8. **Involvement of Persons with Disabilities:** The ADA Coordinator and staff must actively recruit students with disabilities to participate in the student council, advisory boards, committees, etc.

9. ADA Coordinators must attend at least one ADA training each year. It is strongly recommended that the ADA Coordinator complete six hours of disability related professional development each year. A new ADA Coordinator, defined as an individual with less than one year of experience in the position, should complete a five-hour ADA overview orientation. It is strongly recommended that new ADA Coordinators continue to develop his/her knowledge of the ADA by participating in additional professional development opportunities.

### **Fiscal Responsibilities**

Grantees must operate programs using sound fiscal procedures that meet all state and federal requirements.

- Non-governmental grantees must submit an annual audit report to the ACLS grants liaison that segregates ESE adult education grants in a separate fund.
- The grant recipient will not use the award funds to pay for expenses that have been paid for by any other local, state, federal, or private award.
- Fiscal reports must be submitted by the deadline established by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education unless the grant recipient acquires a prior written waiver. Failure to submit/transmit timely and accurate reports will result in a suspension of further payments until the Department receives accurate and complete reports.
- Programs must track expenditures and notify the ACLS Program Specialist if there is a change in their fiscal plan (under spending, etc.). If a program believes that funds will be unspent during the program year, they must notify ACLS at least 2 months prior to the end of the fiscal year. ACLS will reallocate these funds, as unspent funds are reverted back to the state or federal government, not to ACLS.
- Programs must maintain a time and effort record for each staff person that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.
- All staff must be paid for the number of hours and at the hourly rate reflected in the Program Design approved by ACLS. This includes hours and rates on the Direct, Indirect and Match staff plans.

#### **Acknowledge ACLS/ESE Funding**

*Grant recipients must identify the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education as the entity supporting the delivery of services in any official correspondence, brochures and publications.*

### **Grants Information**

<http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/>

### **Facility Costs**

Rental costs may be charged to the ESE grant if the program was approved for a space set-aside or is using unrestricted funds.

- The agency must have on file rental documents, such as leases or receipts that demonstrate the actual amount of money paid to the landlord.
- The cost of the space being claimed by the agency must be adjusted to reflect the percent usage for the funded program.

- If the agency claims donated or in-kind space as match, the agency must be able to demonstrate that the amount claimed reflects the market value of that space prorated for usage by the ABE program.
- Agencies receiving 100% reimbursement for facilities costs from state government (e.g., public schools, community colleges, corrections facilities) may not charge lease, rental, or utilities costs to state or federally funded grants with the intention of using the grant money to supplant the state's contribution. Grant funds may be used for facilities costs if the agency has a cost allocation plan to identify each allocated service and defines the method used to appropriately distribute the costs on a reasonable and consistent basis.

### **Matching Funds**

Programs must provide fully auditable matching resources for each year of the multi-year grant equal to at least 20% of the initial grant award.

A program can claim as match the value of the volunteers who are providing tutoring services and the services provided by non-instructional volunteers. The value of volunteer hours that are claimed as match should be set at \$15/hour; the value of non-instructional volunteer hours (e.g., for clerical support) that are claimed as match should be based on the standard hourly rate for a given position at an agency, not to exceed \$15/hour. The ESE will limit the value of volunteer time included in the program's matching share on the ESE grant to 5% of the grant, not to exceed \$20,000. This limit does not apply to Primary Instruction by Volunteer Programs (Fund Code 287).

The cost of equipment used solely for an adult basic education program may be used as a matching expense if it was not purchased with ESE funds. This cost can be used in one of two ways. First, the cost of the equipment may be used as match for one year of the grant. Second, the cost of the equipment may be pro-rated over two or more years, with the pro-rated value serving as the match for two or more respective years. Equipment costs may be used as match if the agency has a cost allocation plan to identify each allocated service and defines the method used to appropriately distribute the costs on a reasonable and consistent basis.

Matching funds must:

- Be fully documented, auditable and comprised of directly allocable (not indirect) costs.
- Add value to program operations, instructional and support services.
- Services provided with matching funds must comply with the Guidelines for Effective ABE and the ABE Rates system.

ESE requires that matching resources support the core ABE instructional program. Funds from grant programs that do not include adults as a target population are not eligible (e.g., after school programs for 7<sup>th</sup> graders). Funds that support any portion of the continuum of services provided to learners through the program are good examples of match that support the core ABE instructional program. Local cash contributions such as local ABE appropriations from cities, towns and LEAs (local educational agencies) are an example of match if it supports the core ABE instructional program. We require that programs list the source of matching funds in grant applications and all applicable budget forms. The chart below provides more detail on eligible match. The chart is not all-inclusive.

Description of Matching Resources
ABE classroom and office equipment
Adult furniture for the ABE program
Advertising for adult learner and/or staff recruitment purposes
Audit-related expenses for the ABE program
Childcare expenses which include an educational component for children of ABE learners
Computer equipment for the ABE program
Conference registrations for ABE program staff
Consulting fees/contracts for computer support in the adult education program
Consulting fees/contracts for substitute ABE teachers
Educational supplies for adult learners in the ABE program
Fringe benefits for ABE program staff
Liability Insurance for the ABE program, staff and board
Maintenance and repair of ABE program's equipment and space
Memberships to ABE-related professional organizations
Office supplies for the ABE program
Printing and reproduction of non-copyrighted materials for ABE program use
Salaries for ABE agency's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator and Program and Staff Development Facilitator in excess of the rate-based amount provided by ESE
Salaries for ABE program's clerical and data entry staff
Salaries for ABE program volunteer coordinators funded by sources other than ESE
Salaries for Administrators including time for any of the categories listed on the staff plan
Salaries for direct service personnel including teachers and counselors including time for any of the categories listed on the staff plan
Salaries for staff who provide translation and interpretation services for the ABE program
Software upgrades for learners and staff in the ABE program
Space <b>with formula</b> used to pro-rate cost including square footage, cost per square foot, pro-rated amount for time used by ABE program
Subscriptions to ABE-related publications for learners and program staff
Telephone and Internet expenses for the program including TTY, ISDN
Transportation for ABE learners (e.g., van, T-passes, etc.)

Description of Matching Resources
Travel expenses for ABE program staff
Vacation/Leave Time for ABE program staff

### **Maintenance of Effort (MOE)**

Community Adult Learning Centers are generally funded for five-year cycles. Programs must meet the maintenance of effort requirement.

- Each year, programs must provide a matching share that is equal to 20% of the grant award or equal to the MOE amount, whichever is greater.
- The matching share in year one of the funding cycle must be the greater of the organization's maintenance of effort in the previous cycle or 20% of the new grant award.
- The MOE/matching share committed in year one of a multi-year grant cannot be reduced without the Department's written approval.

### **Administrative Costs and Indirect Costs**

Grantees must not commit more than 25% of grant funds to administrative costs, including indirect costs.

- Agencies with an ESE-approved indirect cost rate (IDC) shall not receive more than a 5% indirect rate for adult education programs.
- Agencies with an approved federal indirect cost rate shall not receive more than an 8% indirect rate for adult education programs.
- The total of direct and indirect costs may not exceed your total grant award.
- In lieu of charging for indirect costs, grantees that provide an appropriate and detailed allocation of agency wide costs to programs may receive ESE approval to include them as direct costs.
- Agencies must re-apply every year for an approved indirect cost rate.

### **Indirect Cost Rate**

Indirect Costs are costs that can be rationally attributed to the running of a program, but can not reasonably be assigned a direct cost. For example, a fiscal director's salary that cannot be reasonably measured while working over multiple projects. Other examples include a receptionist's salary, and communication costs.

All organizations must apply annually to use an indirect cost rate on grants issued by ESE. If the organization has a federally approved rate, they may apply for that maximum rate for grants. Programs that do not have a federally approved rate, may apply annually for up to 5%. However, all Adult Education Grants have a fixed ceiling of allowing no more than an 8% indirect cost rate.

Programs may also claim indirect in their match. The total amount of indirect costs claimed in the entire grant and the match cannot exceed the total amount of the grant's allowable indirect cost. The final indirect cost expenses claimed on a grant are based on the final expenses of all other categories (except equipment).

### **Indirect Cost Assignment When Sub-Grantees Are Involved**

If both agencies claim indirect (IDC), the total indirect dollar cannot be higher than the amount the prime recipient could receive.

- A subcontract may charge IDC as long as the prime grantee has an approved IDC rate and the total IDC is not more than the prime grantee could receive.
- All subcontracts are bound by the total dollar amount the prime grantee could possibly claim under the grantee's approved IDC rate. If the prime grantee does not have an approved IDC rate, then no subcontract may claim IDC.
- If Prime Grantee (Fiscal Agent) has an approved IDC rate, and the sub-contractors also have approved rates, then both the Prime Grantee and the sub-contractors can charge IDC. The total indirect costs, including that taken by the grantee and the subcontracts, may not exceed the prime grantee's IDC allocation.
- If the subcontract does not have an IDC rate, the prime grantee must have an approved rate in order to assign indirect costs to the subcontract. Note that the total IDC on the grant (including subcontracts) may not exceed the prime grantee's total possible IDC allocation.

### **Memorandum of Agreement**

Grantees that include a collaboration of more than one organization must have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that is signed by all parties and renewed annually. Agencies with sub-contracts must also have an MOA between the lead agency and the sub-contracting agency that is renewed annually. Refer to p. 16 for more information.

- The MOA must include a description of how grant funds relate to supporting overhead costs as well as how funding will be allocated among the partnering organizations.
- The MOA should include the roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization.
- The MOA should outline decision-making protocols.
- The MOA should include protocols for terminating the partnership/s.

### **Full-Time Equivalency**

Grantees must base full-time equivalency (FTE) calculations on the grantee agency's written definition.

- FTE for non-public school programs is calculated by dividing the employees paid hours/year by the number of annual hours that the agency defines as "full time," i.e., (actual paid hrs/wk) x (paid wks/yr) / (agency definition of full time hrs/wk) x (52 wks).
- The FTE for public school programs is based on the district's definition of full-time employment.

### **No Charges to Students for ESE-Funded Classes**

Programs must ensure that adults enrolled in adult basic education programs shall NOT be charged tuition, fees or any other charges or be required to purchase any books or materials that are needed for participation in programs.

- Although discouraged, programs may charge a refundable deposit only for books used for review at home.
- Programs must maintain documentation of the deposits and refunds and must include in its annual report to ESE what percent of deposits are not refunded.



### Non ESE-Fee Based Classes

If the grant recipient operates a fee-based program that provides similar services (i.e., services or instruction in Adult Basic Education, English for Speakers of Other Languages, or Family Literacy services), it will ensure that:

- a) enrollment will be non-discriminatory, specifically, students will not be directed to either the grant-funded or fee-based program on the basis of skill level or anticipated time to reach goals; and,
- b) the resources charged to the ESE grant-funded program, both personnel and non-personnel, will support only the students enrolled in the grant program, and that any services provided to fee-paying students will not be charged to the ESE grant.

Fee income from an ABE, ESOL, or Family Literacy program shall not be used as match for the ESE grant-funded program.

### Guidance for agencies operating both grant-funded and fee-based adult education programs:

- The list below is intended to highlight a few important elements of appropriate fiscal management, and is not comprehensive. Agencies are advised to read *Grants for Schools: Getting Them and Using Them, A Procedural Manual*, available at: <http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/procedure/manual.html>, and to seek counsel from their own auditors to ensure that multiple funding sources are handled appropriately.
- Personnel funded by the ABE grant must dedicate all grant-funded time to work under the ABE grant, and to providing services to clients funded by the ABE grant. Administrators must inform program staff what portion of their time is funded by the ABE grant, and for how many hours per week they must provide services to grant-funded clients.
- For any non-personnel resources charged to the ESE grant, the agency must provide a rationale and methodology for how costs are charged to the grant, and for how costs are allocated across programs that use the resources.
- When space is shared between the ABE grant-funded program and programs supported through fees, foundation grants, or other funding sources, only the percent of space and percent of time that the space is used by the ABE grant-funded program may be charged to the ABE grant.
- The agency must maintain separate auditable financial records which adequately identify the source and the application of individual grant funds, and which include source documentation, i.e. time and attendance records, payrolls, contracts, purchase orders, checks and paid bills.

### Equipment Inventory

Programs must maintain and update annually, an inventory of equipment purchased with ESE funds including: computers, copiers, furniture and other major items purchased. The program must have a policy for disposal of such items when they become out of date. The inventory list should include:

- The model and serial or other identifying number

- The source of the property (grant number, agreement number, etc.)
- Acquisition date and cost
- Location and condition of the equipment prior to disposal
- Date of disposal and sale price (including the method used to determine fair market value), if applicable

## **Records**

Programs must keep all fiscal and student records for a minimum of seven years.

## **Obsolete Equipment**

Equipment may be considered obsolete depending on type. For example, a computer older than four years may be considered obsolete. Some office equipment such as fax or copy machines, overhead projectors may be considered obsolete after five years, while furniture and other large items (desks, file cabinets, vehicles, etc.) may be considered obsolete after ten years. While equipment items may be discarded or disposed of, equipment databases or inventory lists must be kept for not less than 15 years and should be updated annually. Equipment purchase records such as requisitions, packing slips, and invoices must be retained for seven years.

## **Equipment Disposal Requirements**

A program must have a policy for disposal of out-of-date equipment. When a program is in possession of equipment that is either unusable or obsolete, the program may delete the equipment from its active inventory list using any of the following methods:

- Donating the equipment – usable equipment may be transferred to students by means of a lottery or drawing, or may be transferred to another non-profit agency
- Selling the equipment – usable equipment may be sold at fair market value and the resulting income claimed as match.
- Disposing of the equipment – equipment that is no longer usable may be discarded.
- Programs that have usable equipment purchased with ESE /ABE funding that will no longer be used on behalf of an ESE-funded ABE program must notify ACLS. The reallocation of usable equipment is at the discretion of the Department.

### **Mandated Reporters of Abuse**

All adult basic education and ESOL practitioners are considered mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases of suspected abuse. Mandated reporters:

- Include public and private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or adjustment counselors, psychologists, attendance officers, social workers, day care providers, health care professionals, court and public safety officials.
- Are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report. Non-mandated reporters are also protected providing the report was made in “good faith.”
- Are protected from retaliation and identities will be kept confidential.
- Who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

This table outlines age, population, reporting agency and statute information for mandated reporters:

<b>Age</b>	<b>0 – 18 years old</b>	<b>18 – 59 years old</b>	<b>60+</b>
<b>Population</b>	Children	Disabled Adults	Elderly
<b>Reporting Agency</b>	Department of Social Services	Disabled Persons Protection Commission	Executive Office of Elderly Affairs
<b>Statute</b>	51A	19C	19A

## **Program Service Options**

## **Program Service Options**

**Program Service Options** include: ABE for the Homeless, Family Literacy Component, Participatory Health Component, and the Volunteer Component. With the exception of the ABE for the Homeless, the PSOs are a supplement to Community Adult Learning Centers/Core ABE programs. ABE for the Homeless can be offered as a supplement to a Core ABE program/CALC or as its own CALC.

### **ABE for the Homeless**

ACLS uses the federal definition of homeless. The federal definition of a homeless person is: “An individual who (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and (2) has a primary nighttime residence that is (a) a supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters and transitional housing for the mentally ill), (b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized or (c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” (McKinney Act (P.L. 100-77, sec 103(2)(1), 101 sat. 485 (1987))).

### **Program Design for ABE for the Homeless**

- Homeless service providers must collaborate with a Community Adult Learning Center to ensure that homeless adults have access to a full continuum of ABE services.
- Adult Basic Education for the Homeless programs may offer multi-level classes.
- ABE for the Homeless programs may offer a sequence of two classes.
- Programs must maintain an active enrollment of a minimum of seven adult learners per class.
- Funds must be used to provide rate-based classes to homeless adults.
- ABE for the Homeless programs must adhere to the Performance Standards.
- Programs must include an evaluation (including student and program outcomes) of the ABE for the Homeless component in an annual continuation application.

### **Family Literacy and Family Support**

ACLS supports programs that provide integrated Family Literacy and Family Support services to parents. ACLS uses the federal definition of family literacy services contained in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act). This act defines family literacy as "...services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and that integrate all of the following activities:

1. Interactive literacy activities<sup>1</sup> between parents and their children (Programs may provide non-rate based classes for interactive literacy and parenting education/support or provide these services through a collaboration.)

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of interactive literacy activities is to provide opportunities for positive interaction between parents and children, to model effective practices and promote the value of literacy in families.

2. Training for parents on how to be the primary teachers for their children and full partners in their children's education
3. Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency
4. Age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences."

### **Program Design for Family Literacy**

In addition to following policies for CALCs, programs with Family Literacy must:

- Coordinate the collaboration among partnering organizations in order to support the integration of existing components (adult basic education, childhood education, interactive literacy, and parenting support/education) into a comprehensive and unified family literacy program. These roles and responsibilities must be detailed in an MOA and updated annually.
- Have a coordinator to identify and recruit families and to serve as a liaison to partnering organizations (e.g., children's education program, public school, family service providers, etc.).
- Provide services to parents enrolled in a Community Adult Learning Center.
- Actively collaborate with the educational providers of the participating children to develop curricula that is mutually reinforcing.
- Maintain an active enrollment of a minimum of 8 families who participate over time in both rate and non-rate based classes.
- Project the number of students who will be served annually.
- Assist participating parents in creating a minimum of one goal related to their children's learning and monitor progress toward the stated goal(s).
- Submit a report that addresses student and program outcomes in the annual continuation application.

### **Participatory Health Education**

ACLS supports the literacy, language and leadership skill development of students enrolled in a Community Adult Learning Center through participatory health education. Programs that have the participatory health education PSO are required to form student health teams.

### **Program Design for Participatory Health Education**

- Programs must have a program facilitator to serve as a link to student health team members and to collaborate with health care organizations and other related resources within the community.
- Programs are encouraged to develop and support student leadership through the creation of student health teams and activities. Student health teams are comprised of adult learners, enrolled in a Community Adult Learner Center, working with the facilitator to promote health education in ABE programs. The activities of the student health teams include, but are not limited to: researching health topics; developing health-related curricula and lesson plans; creating health education materials; providing health-related instruction; and providing staff development.
- Student Health Team members must be actively enrolled in a Community Adult Learning Center class.
- A significant amount of the funding for the participatory health education component, not less than 20%, must be used to compensate students for their work.

- Programs must integrate health topics into the comprehensive ABE/ESOL instructional services and build on the ABE/ESOL and Health Curriculum Frameworks.
- Programs must include an evaluation (including student and program outcomes) of the Participatory Health Education Component in an annual continuation application.

### **Volunteer Component**

ACLS supports effective supplementary instruction from well-trained and supported volunteers provided to students enrolled in Community Adult Learning Centers.

### **Program Design for Volunteer Component**

Programs with a volunteer component must identify a Volunteer Coordinator who is responsible for implementing effective processes for tutor screening, referral, orientation, training, placement, ongoing supervision and support.

- Funds for a volunteer component for a Community Adult Learning Center must be used to support a minimum of .25 FTE or a .5 FTE Volunteer Coordinator. The .25 FTE Volunteer Coordinator will be required to maintain a minimum active caseload of 20 tutor matches with a minimum of 12 tutors. The .50 FTE Coordinator will be required to maintain a minimum active case load of 35 volunteer matches (assignments) with a minimum of 24 tutors.
- Funds for a volunteer component in collaboration with one or more additional ESE-funded programs must be used to support a .75 or 1.0 FTE Volunteer Coordinator. The .75 FTE Volunteer Coordinator will be required to maintain a minimum active caseload of 50 tutor matches with a minimum of 36 tutors. Programs with a 1.0 FTE Coordinator serving more than one ESE-funded program is required to maintain a minimum active caseload of 65 tutor matches (assignments) with a minimum of 48 tutors.

<b>Number of Programs Served</b>	<b>One Community Adult Learning Center</b>	<b>One Community Adult Learning Center</b>	<b>More than one Community Adult Learning Center</b>	<b>More than one Community Adult Learning Center</b>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator Time</b>	.25 FTE	.50 FTE	.75 FTE	1 FTE
<b>Active Volunteer Caseload</b>	No less than 12	No less than 24	No less than 36	No less than 48
<b>Active Volunteer/Student Matches (assignments)</b>	No less than 20 matches	No less than 35 matches	No less than 50	No less than 65

- The ESE defines volunteer matches (assignments) as volunteers
  - Who provide tutoring to one, two, three or four enrolled students outside of regular class time;
  - Placed as in-class assistants or working with one or more students during class time.

Tutors may be credited for more than one match (e.g., Tutor A with Student B is one match, if Tutor A also tutors Student C, then the program is credited with two matches).

- The minimum active caseload must be maintained throughout the program year.
- Programs must make a concerted effort to recruit volunteers who reflect the ethnicity, race, nationality and language background of the student population.
- Volunteers are required to make a minimum service commitment of 6 months. However, exceptions may be allowed for shorter-term placements (e.g., a college student volunteering for a semester). Short-term volunteer placements are placements that result in 30 or more hours of volunteer service in less than six months.
- Volunteers must receive a minimum of 12 hours of initial training, to be completed within the first ten weeks of service. The recommended range of hours for this initial training is 12-15. Programs must maintain documentation of tutor participation in initial and in-service training.
- Volunteers must be paired with students who are enrolled in ESE-funded classroom-based ABE programs, with few exceptions. Any volunteer who has been tutoring an enrolled student may continue to tutor the student when the student is no longer enrolled (e.g., due to a reasonable interruption in the student's class participation) as long as the student is still working towards meeting her/his goals, up to attainment of the skills and abilities expected of a high school graduate.
- A minimum of 85% of the tutor matches must be with students actively enrolled in an ESE - funded ABE class.
- Programs with a volunteer component must maintain records of all tutoring hours provided by *volunteers* whom the programs claim or identify as tutor *matches*. Programs must track and show the number of students served by volunteers and the number of individual student hours as a result of tutoring.
- Programs must include an evaluation (including student and program outcomes) of the Volunteer Component in an annual continuation application.



**Links for Additional Guidelines by ESE/ACLS**

- **Community Planning Guidelines** - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/cp/guidelines.doc>
- **Disability Guidelines** - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/disability/guidelines.doc>
- **Distance Learning Guidelines** – [http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/dl/DL\\_guidelines.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/dl/DL_guidelines.doc)
- **Transition Guidelines** - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/cc/transition.doc>

### **The Massachusetts Indicators of ABE Program Quality**

In 1992 revisions to the National Adult Education Act created a mandate for states to adopt Indicators of Program Quality and to use those Indicators to evaluate and monitor program effectiveness. ACLS developed the Indicators of Program Quality that Massachusetts would use by engaging with the field to identify measures, standards, and resources. Although the Indicators of Program Quality have been reorganized over the years, they reflect the values identified in consultation with ABE practitioners in the early 1990s. They continue to represent the foundation on which the ACLS Program Monitoring is built. These include:

<b>Indicators of Program Quality</b>	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
<b>Indicator 1: Curriculum Development, Implementation and Instructional Methods</b>	Curriculum development and instruction are aligned with and incorporate learning standards from the Massachusetts ABE Curriculum Frameworks, and contribute to students' progress toward achieving their goals.
<b>Indicator 2: Student Educational Progress</b>	Students demonstrate gains in literacy and/or English skills and abilities that impact their roles as workers, family members, community members, and as lifelong learners.
<b>Indicator 3: Instructional Support Services</b>	The program offers counseling and other services to support instruction and meet students' needs.
<b>Indicator 4: Community Linkages</b>	The program has developed linkages that connect community assets to student needs.
<b>Indicator 5: Program Continuous Improvement Planning</b>	Program continuous improvement planning embodies effective organizational structures and processes to serve the needs of adult students.
<b>Indicator 6: Professional Development</b>	Exemplary professional development opportunities enhance educator professionalism to provide quality instruction for students.
<b>Indicator 7: Program Management, Leadership and Accountability</b>	Program management and accountability are efficient, and effectively address all components of service delivery.

**Program Director Reminders  
FY 2012**

<b>Items to Submit to ESE</b>	<b>Projected Due Date</b>
○ <b>ADA Checklist</b>	<b>October 2011</b>
○ <b>SMARTT Waitlist Verification</b>	<b>December 2011</b>
○ <b>TABE Clas-E Recertification (Due to SABES)</b>	<b>February 29, 2012</b>
○ <b>BEST Plus Recertification (Due to SABES)</b>	<b>March 31, 2012</b>
○ <b>Request for Rollover in SMARTT (Data Verification)</b>	<b>August 2012</b>

<b>Fiscal Reminders</b>	<b>Date</b>
○ <b>Monthly Draw Down</b>	<b>Monthly</b> - Request for funds window is open the 20 <sup>th</sup> of the month and closes on the last day of the month.
○ <b>Annual Audit</b>	<b>Yearly</b>
○ <b>Indirect Cost Rate Application (if applicable)</b>	<b>On or about May 1, 2012</b>
○ <b>Amendments*</b> <i>*Subject to change at the discretion of the budget office</i>	<b>45 days prior to end of grant</b>
○ <b>FR1 Form (Final Reporting Form)</b>	<b>No later than 60 days after grant ends</b>
<b><a href="http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/">http://finance1.doe.mass.edu/Grants/</a> (Grants for Schools: Getting them and using them)</b>	